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General Assembly

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Official Records

39th plenary meeting

Tuesday, 30 October 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim . . . . (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 43

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/62/3)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/283)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/277)

The President: The General Assembly will now consider agenda item 43, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council".

In connection with this item, I would like to recall to the members of the General Assembly that, pursuant to Assembly resolution 58/316 of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, to consider agenda item 43 in its entirety in plenary, on the understanding that the administrative, programme and budgetary aspects should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider item 43 in its entirety in the plenary, the relevant parts of chapter I of the report that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

I give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council, Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania), President of the Economic and Social Council: I have the honour to introduce the 2007 report of the Economic and Social Council.

This year's substantive session was an important landmark in the work of the Council. It laid the foundation for a renewed Economic and Social Council. By implementing the vision of the 2005 World Summit, this session opened new avenues for the future of the Council, particularly the annual ministerial review and the launch of the biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

I would like to briefly highlight some of the key outcomes of this session and then focus on some future steps.

This year's special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, World Trade Organization and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) initiated preparations for the Follow-up of the International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha, in the second half of 2008. That meeting represents the centrepiece of our dialogue on the global partnership for development.

The first annual ministerial review exceeded all expectations. It provided focus and concrete content to the discussion of policies and means required to improve and accelerate implementation of Millennium Development Goals 1 and 8, the eradication of poverty and hunger through the global partnership for development. I hope the Assembly will draw upon the

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work of the Council for its specific meeting focused on development, as decided in Assembly resolution 60/265.

The high point of the review was, in my view, the national voluntary presentations by the ministers of six developing countries — Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia and Ghana — which became an occasion for peer review, knowledge sharing and information exchange. From them, five key policy messages emerged. First, national development strategies are working, but not at the pace required. We need to accelerate and scale-up the implementation process. Secondly, the global partnership should be made more effective in all its dimensions. Thirdly, the global economic environment should be made pro-development and pro-poor. Fourthly, monitoring the implementation of commitments and accountability should be strengthened. Finally, emerging threats that hamper efforts to realize these goals, such as climate change and desertification, should be addressed urgently.

The high number of countries that have volunteered to be reviewed by the Council next year, including many developed countries, highlights the Council's role as a convener and the central forum for reviewing global development goals. Next year's presentations should be a further step forward as the Council will be undertaking a review of countries at different stages of development and different perspectives.

We also had a very stimulating dialogue at the launch of the biennial Development Cooperation Forum, a unique global platform in which all actors engaged in a dialogue on key policy issues affecting development cooperation, which included issues such as the quantity, quality and impact of aid and aid coordination. The task of the 2008 Forum will be to offer strong analysis and provide guidance on how development cooperation can best support the internationally agreed development goals.

The ministerial declaration, adopted by consensus, sends an important message that the international community is united in dealing with the obstacles and challenges in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly Goal 1.

The practical dimension of partnerships was illustrated at the first-ever Innovation Fair, where a dozen United Nations system entities, several non-governmental organizations and private sector entities showcased their products and projects for the reduction of hunger, malnutrition and poverty. Innovation Fairs are expected to serve as the hub for promoting and catalysing tangible, multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementing the United Nations development agenda.

The deliberations on the theme of strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macroeconomic policies, highlighted five key policy messages. First, the link between economic growth and poverty reduction is complex and there is a need for further study, including on their relation to equity. Secondly, there is a need for broad-based macroeconomic policies, which should be formulated in the framework of a national development strategy. Thirdly, some national policies have spill-over effects on other countries, while external conditions affect national economies. Fourthly, there is a need to increase the voice and participation of developing countries in international decision-making. Finally, international regimes that had been developed without much participation by developing countries need to be reviewed and reassessed.

The Council's coordination segment showed that the 2006 ministerial declaration has mobilized the United Nations system and Governments in making employment and decent work a central objective of their policies and activities. That augurs well for strengthening linkages between the high-level and coordination segments of the Council in order to translate its normative work into practical implementation. During the humanitarian affairs segment, the Council gave guidance on how to strengthen the coordination of the humanitarian system of the United Nations. It highlighted the need for the capacity-building of national, local and regional organizations; broader partnerships among humanitarian organizations; and the need to improve humanitarian stand-by capacities, including with the private sector.

Many proposed that the Economic and Social Council should become a more active body by convening ad hoc meetings on humanitarian emergencies. I believe that this collective thinking should be put into action in line with General Assembly resolution 61/16.

The Council's work on the operational activities for development was of special significance. A number of themes emerged in the discussions on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review, which have informed the Assembly's debates over the past days. These include the importance of national ownership and leadership of United Nations operational activities; the need for increased, more stable and predictable core and non-core resources; the significance of support by the United Nations system in countries in transition from relief to development; and better coordination with peacebuilding efforts. Also, the need for greater coordination and coherence of the United Nations system at the country level was highlighted.

In the general segment, the Council focused on, among other issues, consolidating and coordinating the work of its subsidiary bodies. The Council's role in this area is becoming all the more important as we proceed to implement the United Nations development agenda in a unified and effective way.

Many other outcomes of the Council are of key relevance to the work of the Assembly, such as those on human rights, social development and gender mainstreaming, to mention only a few. They will, I am sure, help the Second and Third Committees in their work.

Allow me to share with you what I see as the next issues for the Council where we need to mobilize our efforts to achieve the goals of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1). The 2005 World Summit rightly highlighted the linkages between peace, development and human rights and the need for multidimensional strategies. Nine out of the ten countries with the lowest human development indicators have experienced conflict at some point since 1990. Those countries are clearly very far from achieving the targets and goals set out in the United Nations development agenda.

The new role assigned to the Economic and Social Council to conduct annual ministerial reviews will, hopefully, strengthen its capacity to contribute to the area of peacebuilding. That will give the Council the opportunity to continually assess how conflict is affecting the implementation of the development agenda and to review and share lessons learned on how development strategies can help forestall violent conflict. The biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum can also provide a unique opportunity for the Council to examine how development cooperation can best support countries seeking to emerge from conflict.

The agreement to extend the Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Haiti is a clear recognition of the useful contribution that the Council can make to the long-term development of such countries. The lessons learned from those Groups could contribute to enriching the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. I will work with members of the Council's Bureau in further strengthening the ties between the relevant bodies.

The Council has unique Charter-based tasks aimed at promoting stronger, coordinated responses from the United Nations system and other partners to humanitarian crises. It can also help to ensure equal focus on investing in mitigation and investing in development processes, which reduces the vulnerability of those most at risk. The Council was asked by the 2005 World Summit to play a role in monitoring a coherent international response. In recent years, it has undertaken that role by convening emergency sessions aimed at strengthening the coordination of the emergency humanitarian system of the United Nations. I believe that the time has come to adopt a regular practice for turning to the Council whenever major humanitarian emergencies occur. That would be a step towards the implementation of its mandate to address such situations.

In conclusion, a more substantive and interactive relationship is developing between the Assembly and the Council that should help in providing practical orientation to the international community in the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome. My experience as President of the Economic and Social Council has shown me the potential of the Council in meeting many of the core concerns of the international community. The convening power and the spirit of engagement that have been the hallmark of United Nations conferences are captured in the Economic and Social Council. That inclusive spirit of United Nations international conferences permeated this year's session of the Council.

It is now a time of great change. New forms of international cooperation are emerging and new institutional arrangements are being put in place as part of the efforts to eradicate poverty, protect people from disasters and protect our environment and especially to address climate change. It is also a time of high expectations: despite important gains in the standard of living, there remain tremendous challenges including poverty and hunger, especially in Africa. We must get development right for the world's peoples.

Mr. Mahmood (Pakistan): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the item entitled, "Report of the Economic and Social Council" and the item entitled, "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields".

The 2007 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council was special and in some ways historic, because we embarked on the operationalization of the new responsibilities assigned to the Council by the leaders at the 2005 World Summit. Those responsibilities were elaborated in General Assembly resolution 61/16.

For the Group of 77 and China this was a welcome and important step towards revitalizing and further strengthening the Economic and Social Council, with a view to allowing it to perform the central role on economic and social issues envisaged for it under the United Nations Charter.

During the substantive session, we were happy to see the thematic discussion of the high-level segment develop complementarity with the newly acquired functions of the Economic and Social Council: the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum. We were able to articulate our views and vision on strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macroeconomic policies.

The Group of 77 and China is also reasonably satisfied with the convening of the first annual ministerial review and the successful launch of the Development Cooperation Forum during the 2007 Session. Nonetheless, we believe that the first annual ministerial review was a somewhat one-sided event, with only developing countries making their voluntary national presentations. We would like to take the opportunity to reiterate our call for substantive and equal participation on the part of developed partners in future sessions of the annual ministerial review. It would help to know how far their policies are in conformity with the guidelines for aid effectiveness, as well as how they see the implementation of the commitments undertaken under the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals.

It is our hope that the annual ministerial review will look honestly at the status of implementation by both developed and the developing countries and will come to conclusions that will invigorate the process of implementation of the commitments undertaken under the Millennium Development Goals and the internationally agreed development goals and that it will advance the development agenda in a comprehensive and universal manner, so that we can eradicate poverty.

We are also glad that, consistent with paragraph 8 of resolution 61/16, we have been able to decide on the annual ministerial review themes for 2007 and 2008, focusing on the implementation of agreed development goals and commitments. The Group of 77 and China is of the firm view that the purpose of the annual ministerial review, in addition to reviewing the status of implementation of various commitments, should be to identify the gaps, shortcomings and successes, both at the national level and at the level of our development partners, and to further develop policy recommendations to advance the implementation process. We hope that future ministerial declarations issued by the Economic and Social Council after annual ministerial reviews will contain both an assessment as well as recommendations for action. In this regard, the adoption of the ministerial declaration by consensus at the first session of the reinvigorated Economic and Social Council was also auspicious and bodes well for our future work.

The Group of 77 and China looks forward to the substantive launch of the Development Cooperation Forum in 2008. We see the Development Cooperation Forum as an outstanding opportunity to enhance global partnership for development as set out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

In our view, the overall purpose of the Development Cooperation Forum should be to ensure, first, that development cooperation is responsive to the needs of the developing countries, as set out in their national development plans and strategies, and to the internationally agreed development goals and the Millennium Development Goals; secondly, that the quality and quantity of development financing is adequate and appropriate to the needs of the recipient countries; thirdly, that development cooperation achieves the desired objectives and results; and fourthly, that such cooperation is pursued in a coordinated and coherent manner at the national, regional and global levels.

The effectiveness and relevance of the Development Cooperation Forum will depend to a large extent on the ability to monitor implementation. As in the case of the annual ministerial review, we would advocate the development of agreed criteria and benchmarks to measure the implementation, effectiveness and results of development cooperation.

The Group of 77 and China has consistently called for effective monitoring of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the internationally agreed development goals. We believe that, while there are some indicators to measure progress achieved with regard to the first seven MDGs, specific benchmarks and targets should be developed to measure the implementation of MDG 8, as well as the internationally agreed development goals. We call on the United Nations — especially the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, as well as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the World Trade Organization, to contribute to the elaboration of this type of specific benchmarks to facilitate the monitoring of the implementation of MDG 8 and other internationally agreed development goals.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The resolution entitled "Follow-up to the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit, including the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals" (resolution 60/265) reaffirmed that the United Nations is the central, fully inclusive, global, multilateral, international and representative organization responsible for development policies, review and progress, and for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the United Nations major conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

The United Nations system must, therefore, in accordance with resolution 60/265, strengthen the existing mechanisms and, where appropriate, establish effective mechanisms to monitor, review and follow-up on the implementation of the outcomes of all the major United Nations conferences and summits in the social, economic and related fields as a matter of priority.

We also look forward during this session to the convening of a specific meeting of the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 60/265, focused on development, covering, inter alia, an assessment of progress made over the previous year.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the importance of the United Nations playing a central role in the promotion of international cooperation for development. The United Nations should undertake regular periodic review and assessment of international economic and development policies, including those of the Bretton Woods institutions, and their impact on development. In this regard, we request the Secretary-General to undertake an analysis of the resources needed to exercise the mandates, as outlined in decisions taken in General Assembly resolutions 60/265 and 61/16.

Mr. Lobo de Mesquita (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes this opportunity to discuss the report of the Economic and Social Council and the work of the Council in 2007 (A/62/3). Indeed, this year has been an historic one for the Economic and Social Council, with the holding of the first annual ministerial review and Development Cooperation Forum, giving life to the reforms instituted by our heads of State and Government during the 2005 World Summit.

These new modalities ensure that the Economic and Social Council will remain the central mechanism for the follow-up of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals. Indeed, the annual ministerial review and the Development

Cooperation Forum will serve as a vehicle to step up efforts to put the international community on track to meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to reinforce the Council's coordinating role in the economic, social, environmental and related fields.

The decision by the Council to focus the first annual ministerial review on the theme of "Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development" was appropriate, channelling thereby the efforts of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council around MDG 1.

As the objective of this meeting is to provide a global high-level forum where a systematic review of progress is made in the implementation of the United Nations development agenda, including offering a platform for an exchange of lessons learned and successful practices and approaches, the European Union remains committed to continue focusing these efforts on the MDGs on an individual or clustered basis, so as to keep them under systematic and substantive review, thereby increasing the attention given to these critical development areas.

With its new functional architecture and potential to advance implementation by promoting synergies and linkages, the annual ministerial review started already this year to present itself as a high-level, well-attended forum aimed at looking more deeply at strategic issues of the international development agenda and associated policy responses. In this regard, the organization of the informal high-level roundtables that dealt with climate change and its complex linkages with poverty eradication and sustainable development, desertification and public health, deserve very positive mention.

The European Union strongly believes that the United Nations must be at the centre of global efforts to tackle climate change. It therefore strongly advocates constructive dialogue and encourages consideration of these issues in all appropriate forums, as long as these efforts remain linked to the United Nations process.

The EU is pleased that the Council, during its resumed substantive session, adopted a two-year programme of work for the annual ministerial review, following the recommendation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the work of the Economic and Social Council. This programme of work for the high-level segment will provide a solid work plan that will aid in raising the profile of the work of the Council and provide the predictability necessary for the subsidiary bodies of the Council and other relevant actors to best contribute to its deliberations in a timely manner.

The Economic and Social Council should not act alone, but should build on the work done by its subsidiary machinery and benefit from outside contributions, be they from the wider international community or from civil society. The European Union is of the view that, to maintain the predictability required to ensure the best level of preparation for and participation in the annual ministerial review, the Council must ensure that themes for future sessions are adopted, preferably, two years in advance of their organization.

The European Union fully expects that the Development Cooperation Forum will become an important part of the international discussion on the development cooperation agenda and the global partnership for development, as well as a crucial mechanism to emphasize the Council's role as the policy coordination body of the United Nations system for economic, social and environmental matters. The Forum could be an important coordination and cooperation mechanism in the context of the existence of an array of multilateral and bilateral players, a growing number of new donor countries and an increasing number of special-purpose global funds, added to the growing role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector in development cooperation. The very fact that the Forum is open to participation by all stakeholders, including United Nations organizations, international financial and trade institutions, regional organizations, civil society and private sector representatives, strengthens the European Union's conviction about the utility of such a Forum.

Regarding the agenda of the Development Cooperation Forum, the European Union considers it important that the Forum also address issues such as aid architecture, the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the role of new and emerging donors. This dialogue should also contribute to ensuring that important principles relevant to development cooperation, such as the principle of national ownership and leadership, are fully taken into account by all stakeholders. The EU looks forward to the shaping of an agenda for next year's Development Cooperation Forum that raises the added value of this new modality and does not duplicate work done by others.

Permit me now to make a few points regarding the other segments of the substantive session of the Council. By focusing its discussions and interaction on the theme of the role of the United Nations system in promoting full employment and decent work, following up on the 2006 ministerial declaration, the coordination segment this year allowed for a thorough assessment of United Nations system-wide endeavours to revive the goals of employment and decent work for all as essential elements for all international and national policies, in the context of the MDGs, poverty reduction strategies and other policy frameworks. Work and employment are really key elements in the context of sustainable development, in all of its three dimensions, connecting the economic dimension of people's lives with the social and the environmental dimensions. In this sense, decent work cannot merely be seen as a source of income, but also perceived as a condition for people to live a self-determined life and to participate fully as citizens in their communities and their entire natural environment.

As regards the humanitarian segment of the substantive session, dedicated to the strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance through enhancing the effectiveness of needs-based humanitarian assistance, we were very pleased with the discussions surrounding not only aspects of assistance and continued humanitarian reform in the larger sense, but also the debate on important issues such as the use of military assets in natural disaster relief and needs-based humanitarian financing. The EU looks forward, and is committed, to working with others during this General Assembly in order to continue the dialogue and make further contributions in the context of the humanitarian agenda for the benefit of people in need.

The operational activities segment provided a platform for extensive discussions on the upcoming triennial comprehensive policy review of the United Nations system's operational activities for development that will serve as an important basis for General Assembly consideration and orientation of reforms in this critical area of the United Nations. The EU welcomes the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review as a unique tool to further advance current reforms to improve the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities and their responsiveness to developing countries' needs and national priorities and the achievement of the MDGs and the internationally agreed development goals.

The general segment of the substantive session was rather successful this year, having managed to resolve a majority of the issues before it. Indeed, a majority of the remaining issues were dealt with during the recent resumed substantive session of the Council. Without disregarding other equally important items before the Council in its resumed session, the EU would like to recall the adoption of a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the adoption of a multi-year programme of work for the period of 2007-2015 for the United Nations Forum on Forests, considering their particular importance in the context of international forest policy and cooperation around the shared global objectives on forests. The EU is of the view that the organization of a special public event, coinciding with the adoption of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests by the General Assembly, would not only increase public awareness of this landmark instrument, but would also further contribute to strengthening political commitment and action at all levels around the shared global objectives on forests.

The Council, through its annual spring meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, will have an important role in the run-up to the 2008 Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha in 2008. It can play that role by selecting carefully and in a timely manner the themes to be considered at the spring meeting, with a view to the Council President's summary providing a substantive and concrete contribution to the deliberations of the Doha Conference later that year.

The European Union is committed to completing the mandate of strengthening the Council, as mandated by paragraphs 155 and 156 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). Indeed, the adoption of resolution 61/16 and the subsequent organization of the annual ministerial review and the launching of the Development Cooperation Forum have been concrete steps towards two of the three aspects of this strengthening. In this context, the European Union is looking forward to the discussions held on the adaptation of work of the Council, including its organization of work, agenda and current methods of work, as the third pillar of this strengthening, as per Council decision 2006/206. One critical issue that will need to be discussed in that exercise will be the structure of the high-level segment and the balance between the sessions to be held in New York and Geneva. We look forward to discussions on these important issues in December.

Before closing, the European Union takes this opportunity to thank the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council for its efforts ensuring the success of its previous and recently resumed substantive sessions. We also extend our congratulations to the Secretariat for all of its hard work, including the new Economic and Social Council website, which has proved to be an extremely useful tool.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation associates itself with what was said by delegation of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

One year has gone by since the approval of resolution A/61/16 concerning the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, which establishes, inter alia, two elements that my country considers fundamental to improving the work of the Council — substantive annual reviews at the ministerial level, and the Development Cooperation Forum.

In this respect, we welcome with great pleasure the first annual ministerial review, which took place in Geneva in July of this year and which focused on the theme of strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development.

In this respect, we wish to point out certain concepts that we deem fundamental and which have been defined in the ministerial declaration: first, the determination to strengthen the work to eradicate the scourges of poverty and hunger, and to ensure that the greatest priority be given to this objective in national development strategies and international cooperation for development; secondly, the commitment to promote sustained economic growth in the developing countries and the recognition that the national activities in this area must be supplemented in a conducive international context; and thirdly, the recognition of poverty and inequality constitute a problem for all countries, irrespective of their level of development. Furthermore, poverty continues to be a huge problem in middle-income countries, and it is necessary to support relevant initiatives to alleviate it.

In this regard, the fight against poverty and inequity is currently our most formidable challenge, as well as the driving principle behind the national and foreign policy of Peru. Based on the belief that human dignity and well-being are the focus of its efforts and that economic indicators must be based on the well-being of our population without distinction, the Peruvian Government has refocused its social policy to focus on economic inclusion, access to education and technological innovations, as well as nationwide institutional development and support for the population.

Furthermore, to comply with the Millennium Development Goals, Peru firmly aims to reduce the present level of poverty from 50 per cent to 30 per cent by the year 2011. Chronic malnutrition will be reduced from 25 per cent to 16 per cent, and drinking water services and electricity will be extended to 90 per cent of Peru's citizens. In addition, we have planned to eradicate illiteracy, reduce informal employment from 53 per cent to 35 per cent, create 1.5 million jobs and reduce the external debt from 24 per cent to 13 per cent of the gross domestic product.

My country also welcomes the start-up last July in Geneva of the Development Cooperation Forum. In fact, as the President of the Economic and Social Council said during the launching of the Forum, this constitutes a fundamental stage in the implementation of the global partnership for development. For the first time, questions of international cooperation will be reviewed by the Economic and Social Council in order to strengthen the impact of cooperation for development.

In this respect, we believe that the Forum should be strengthened by the results of meetings like the third High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, which took place only one week ago in this Assembly. The important concepts and different approaches mentioned here must serve as guidelines for the work of the Forum. In this respect, my country wishes to express its will and commitment to participate actively in Forum discussions.

The other element that we wish to emphasize in the report of the Council (A/62/3) has to do with the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its seventh session, which the Forum adopted by consensus, but the decision to adopt the report was deferred by the Council at its Geneva meeting. Peru attaches great importance to the work of this Forum and, therefore, reiterates the urgency of the Council's adopting the report.

To conclude, Peru will continue to promote dialogue and agreement between the peoples of the world as being fundamental values to which they are committed. For that reason and in this belief, Peru has submitted its candidacy to become a member of the Economic and Social Council during the 2009 to 2011 period, for which we request the support of all countries in the elections that will be held in 2008.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, the Russian delegation would like to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council for the very detailed and informative presentation of the Council's report (A/62/3), and would also like to express some words of thanks to the Secretariat for their selfless work in supporting the Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that the Russian Federation has constantly favoured strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council as the leading coordinating body within the United Nations system working to elaborate effective multilateral approaches to resolving urgent problems of socio-economic development and implementing the decisions of the most important forums of the United Nations on development matters. We highly commend the results of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council for 2007. For the first time it was held in its renewed and strengthened format, which became a historic event from the point of the view of the Council's mastering the new functions that were given to it by the World Summit in 2005.

We also commend the first annual ministerial review, which we believe became the highlight of the session. We favour the further development of the practice of the holding, as part of the annual ministerial reviews, of voluntary national presentations, which would be devoted to reviewing the progress of countries in achieving international development goals. We consider the annual ministerial review to be an effective mechanism for monitoring the implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits, as provided by the relevant decisions of the Organization. We believe that on the whole, the annual ministerial review has enabled the Council to more effectively carry out its mandate of coordinating international cooperation within the framework of the global development agenda.

Of equal importance is the launching of the Development Cooperation Forum, which we believe will serve as a key platform for dialogue among various parties interested in considering the effectiveness of promoting development.

As the session demonstrated, its traditional segments — the coordination, operational activities, humanitarian affairs and general segments — continue to be relevant. The need to further strengthen the Council as the principal body ensuring coordination in the economic, social, humanitarian and environmental fields within the entire United Nations system has reaffirmed the importance of the session's coordination segment, which provides a forum for a practical, focused consideration of matters related to the work of the Council's auxiliary bodies. We are pleased that the operational activities segment has maintained its lead role in the discussion and formulation of guidelines concerning operational matters. We also welcome the fact that the fundamental principles guiding this area of the work of the Organization were reaffirmed during the segment.

The outcome of the humanitarian segment indicates that the role of the Council in developing the overall discussion within the United Nations on issues related to humanitarian aid has been strengthened. Moreover, the significance of the Council, as the Organization's basic working forum for the consideration of humanitarian issues, has been reaffirmed.

Given the complexity and variety of the items on the Council's agenda, the general segment also continues to be relevant. We believe it to be essential if the Council is to effectively carry out its functions of assigning tasks and monitoring the work of its auxiliary bodies in development-related matters.

We are convinced that the main outcome of the session has been to reaffirm the role of the Economic and Social Council as the principal United Nations organ providing for the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and as a platform for the formulation of political decisions and concrete practical recommendations on international cooperation in the social, economic, humanitarian and environmental fields.

It is clear that the reform of the Economic and Social Council, which has enhanced the Council's status within the United Nations system, has now been successfully completed. That important body will now be able to focus more effectively on finding agreed solutions to current development-related problems. We also realize that, as the situation evolves in the field of international development, the Council, given its new functions, may occasionally have to revisit the issue of refining its working methods.

For our part, we should like to assure the General Assembly that the Russian Federation intends to continue to play an active role in the work of the Economic and Social Council by promoting optimum decision-making that takes the approaches of all interested parties equally into account.

Mrs. Mills (Jamaica): Jamaica welcomes the opportunity to speak on agenda item 43, on the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2007 (A/62/3). We are particularly pleased to do so following the successful convening this summer of the annual ministerial review and the launch of the Development Cooperation Forum. We expect that this will signal a new phase in our discussions on issues regarding international cooperation for development and the role of the United Nations in advancing the development agenda. We wish to recognize and commend the efforts of the Permanent Representative of Lithuania, President of the Council for 2007, and the rest of his Bureau in guiding the work of the Council since the start of the year.

In addition to the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, with which my delegation wishes to associate itself, I wish to make the following comments on some of the issues that my delegation believes should be borne in mind.

Since the start of the year, the Council has embarked on several key initiatives of particular importance to my delegation. The discussions during the high-level segment of the substantive session, as well as those within the context of the Council's special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, are especially noteworthy.

We also welcome the focus in the coordination segment on promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all, as well as the discussions in the operational activities segment, which will no doubt be instrumental in the General Assembly's ongoing deliberations on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of operational activities aimed at development of the United Nations system.

In addition, we welcome the deliberations held in the context of the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected countries and the many issues covered as part of the Council's work during the general segment. We think that they add currency and value to the wider debate on the issues on the development agenda and that they are integral to forging consensus on how best to advance the implementation of commitments made to promote social and economic development. That is significant, given that we are at risk of failing to attain many of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and given the ever-increasing inequality within and among countries.

Against that background, we see merit in enhancing the impact of the Council's deliberations. That is essential for two reasons. The first is in the context of restoring the imbalance that currently persists with respect to the effective participation of developing countries in global economic decision-making. We remain concerned that calls for good governance at the national level are not reinforced when it comes to the requirements of good governance, transparency and accountability at the global level.

The second reason stems from the need to fully implement the development agenda. In that regard, we have very high expectations of the work to be undertaken by the Council, particularly the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). We believe that the DCF can be a forum for genuine dialogue among Member States — both developed and developing countries — to identify concrete proposals that can give much-needed impetus to the advancement of the global partnership for development.

In the same vein, we believe that the annual spring meeting can be strengthened to better enhance the level of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the

World Trade Organization, without prejudice to their respective governance structures. It is our hope that we will be able to work together to attain that broader objective. In that regard, the current duration and outcome of the spring meeting — which is now confined to one-day meetings and presidential summaries — might have to be re-examined.

The work of the Economic and Social Council in promoting policy dialogue and in coordinating the work of the United Nations in the follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits remains indispensable. It is central to the overall leadership role of the United Nations in promoting the development agenda. For that reason, we attach great importance to ensuring that the Council is adequately equipped and resourced to effectively discharge that responsibility. It is therefore our expectation — particularly in the light of the new functions that the Council will have to assume pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/16 — that this issue will be given special attention by the General Assembly. Consideration should also be given to ensuring that the Council has greater flexibility so that it can take action on development issues as they arise.

My delegation also expects that the Economic and Social Council will continue to expand its collaboration with other organs — especially the Security Council — and with bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission to ensure its participation in the consideration of the economic and social dimensions of conflict situations. That is central to ensuring the rebuilding and strengthening of the economic foundations for stability and overall development.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): I would like to begin by thanking my dear friend and colleague, Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis of Lithuania, the President of the Economic and Social Council, for presenting the 2007 report of the Economic and Social Council, which provides a very good overview of the work of the Council. I would also like to, on a personal note, thank him for our close cooperation in the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council during the past two years.

I would first like to say a few words about this year's substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. The themes for the annual ministerial review and the thematic discussion of the high-level segment this year were well chosen for this first session of the reformed Economic and Social Council. Both themes focused on the eradication of poverty, which is certainly at the heart of the global partnership for development. I am particularly pleased with how successfully the link was made between sustained economic growth and the eradication of poverty in the discussions on both themes.

I would like to draw your special attention to the importance of promoting gender equality in our efforts to eradicate poverty. By empowering women and ensuring equal opportunity, countries can achieve great gains. There is, however, a long way to go. Women are still much more likely than men to be poor, malnourished and illiterate. They usually have less access than men to employment and they are far less likely than men to be politically active. Women's empowerment should be at the centre of any development strategy and ensuring gender equality is vital for pro-poor sustained economic growth and the eradication of poverty.

I will not elaborate on other segments of the Economic and Social Council. I would, however, like to highlight the decisions dealing with the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on countries emerging from conflict, where we have once again established the primary importance of the Economic and Social Council in the area of long-term sustainable development in post-conflict situations. Further continuation of the Groups on Haiti and Guinea-Bissau is an indication of this importance.

We can be fairly satisfied with the overall outcome of this year's substantive session, which marked a milestone in the life of the Economic and Social Council by making the annual ministerial review a success and by launching the biennial Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). I would now like to turn to the future role of the Economic and Social Council, which is facing new challenges with its new functions.

The Council will hold its first substantive session of the DCF next year. The universal and political legitimacy of the Forum — involving all Member States of the United Nations and a broad range of stakeholders engaged in development cooperation — makes it an ideal forum for providing global oversight of aid commitments and aid quality.

The findings and recommendations of the 2008 DCF should also become a reference point for the discussions taking place in next year's Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Doha, as well as in the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. For the DCF to add value to these important intergovernmental processes, it is imperative that the analytical preparations and the consultative process be focused. It is now more important than ever that we avoid overlap and duplication of work.

Another challenge for the Economic and Social Council is the outcome of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. Coordination remains central to the Economic and Social Council functions, and I am sure that the outcome of the follow-up to the Panel's report will strengthen the work of the Council in that area.

As I have had the honour to serve as a Vice-President of the Council for two years, the Economic and Social Council has become closer to my heart than before. I am, therefore, proud of this year's session of a reformed and stronger Economic and Social Council. We should, however, not become complacent. Reform is not over. It is in our hands to make sure that the DCF will become a real forum for development cooperation. A successful Council meeting here in New York next year will be critical, as well as inspirational, for a stronger Economic and Social Council in the future.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Belarus delegation is pleased to note the positive changes that are occurring in the work of the Economic and Social Council. The organizational and deliberative innovations of this year cannot fail to promote a more focused and fruitful consideration of the problems on the agenda of the Council. The exchange of views in the high-level segment on key issues of international socio-economic development, the analysis of global trends for sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty as well as the process of meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become even more focused and authoritative.

In this connection, we would like to refer to the responsible and purposeful work of the Economic and Social Council carried out by the Bureau of the Council and its President, Mr. Čekuolis. We welcome the approaches agreed to at the ministerial session of the Council, where an integrated mechanism to ensure international assistance to needy countries was elaborated. We sincerely hope that this will serve as a practical guide for Member States regarding, first and foremost, the facilitation of access on the part of developing and transitional economy countries to the markets of developed countries.

Belarus wholeheartedly supports continuing the practice of inviting the leaders of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization to meetings of the high-level segment of the Council. This approach, we believe, makes it more effectively possible to combine the efforts of the specialized agencies and the operational funds and programmes to elaborate financial mechanisms for averting and overcoming crises in countries with developing markets.

The economic situation of the world is, on the whole, favourable to achieving the MDGs. However, we know many of the targets are far from having been met. In this connection, we believe that the Economic and Social Council needs to make additional efforts to adapt the instruments for achieving these goals to the conditions prevailing in the developing and transitional economy countries. More energetic encouragement should be given to economic growth in these countries and to promoting the adoption and enhancing of the effectiveness of the implementation of national strategies to combat poverty, hunger, sickness and to enhance financial stability.

Belarus is convinced that there is a need to strengthen the work of the Economic and Social Council aimed at providing targeted support to the efforts of countries with transitional economies. We should recall that it is precisely this group of countries that forms an important reserve for expanding the global donor group for development purposes. In particular, it is important to more actively provide technical assistance that will help to expand the economies of countries with transitional economies, so they can elaborate their own economic policies and strategies in the field of development.

Mr. Petranto (Indonesia): I am speaking on behalf of Ambassador Natalegawa.

Let me first of all thank the Secretary-General for his report on the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

(A/62/89), and the Economic and Social Council for its report for 2007 (A/62/3).

I also wish to align Indonesia's statement with the representative of Pakistan, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields have been instrumental in shaping a broad development vision and defining commonly agreed objectives. Considering their close association, one sector's outcome will surely have an impact on another. For this reason, it is vital to ensure a synergistic follow-up of the various conferences and summits at the institutional level.

We appreciate the efforts undertaken within the United Nations system to enhance the coherence among the various conference follow-up processes. One of the most important developments in that connection was the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council through resolution 61/16 last year. This year, we welcome its operationalization, including the annual ministerial review during the Council's high-level segment in Geneva, and next year in the Development Cooperation Forum.

From my delegation's perspective, these new mechanisms better equip the Council to perform its core functions envisaged in the Charter, as well as to oversee system-wide coordination. My delegation believes that no effort should be spared in making full use of the annual ministerial review as a powerful new tool to advance implementation of the internationally agreed development goals in the economic and social fields.

Furthermore, much is being anticipated with the launch of the biennial High-level Development Cooperation Forum next year. Many developing countries hope that the Forum will help to accelerate the commitments set out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Additionally, the Economic and Social Council's spring meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held over the last few years, have set into motion an interactive and constructive multilateral dialogue that has helped to enhance the voice of developing countries within those international financial institutions.

While acknowledging the positive developments at the global level, integrated and coordinated follow-up must be translated into progress at the country level. National development and poverty reduction strategies must be met with the support of the United Nations. Likewise, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization should also work more closely with the United Nations to match regional and country priorities.

Let me conclude by saying how important the next seven years will be. This year, we reached the halfway mark to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2015 deadline. In view of next year's 2008 Review Conference of the Monterrey Consensus, let us make full use of the current developments in the Economic and Social Council to accelerate progress and ensure that the world is not off track in achieving the MDGs.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 43.

Agenda item 48

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/89)

Mr. Shervani (India): We welcome the opportunity to express our views on the agenda item entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields", particularly on the crucial role of the Economic and Social Council in this regard. We thank the Secretary-General for his report on this issue.

We agree with the Secretary-General that over the last 15 years, the major United Nations conferences and summits have together resulted in the emergence of a comprehensive shared vision of development. Further, as the report notes, the 2005 World Summit embraced a broader concept of internationally agreed development goals, not just limited to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which can be reached through the implementation of the broader set of commitments undertaken at the major United Nations conferences and summits. We also welcome the recognition in the report of the critical role played by the Economic and Social Council in fostering a comprehensive development agenda of the United Nations through an integrated and coordinated implementation of the commitments.

In this regard, we welcome the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council last year and the incorporation of new elements in its functioning. Of these, the annual ministerial review has already been instituted. We believe that this annual event must have a special focus on evaluating the implementation of the global partnership for development and cannot remain limited to assessing national efforts made at achieving the MDGs.

The Development Cooperation Forum has an important role to play in overseeing trends in international development cooperation. The objective must be to ensure that such cooperation is aimed at assisting developing countries in implementing their national development strategies, rather than imposing additional aid conditionalities.

We are happy that the Economic and Social Council has finalized a two-year programme of work for 2008 and 2009 in respect of the annual ministerial review. We believe that this programme will provide the necessary lead time to the various entities of the United Nations system to focus their efforts on the important themes chosen by the Council. However, it is also important for the Council to analyse and discuss topical and emerging issues and not be constrained by the previously agreed programme of work. In this regard, we emphasize the importance of the thematic debate in the high-level segment of the Council's substantive session and urge the early finalization of the theme for the 2008 session.

We believe that the key element of the Economic and Social Council's activities regarding the development agenda relates to its acknowledged role as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development. In this regard, we underline the importance of the new mandate given to the Council last year for undertaking a regular and periodic review and assessment of international economic and development policies and their impact on development.

International economic, financial and trade policies play a crucial role vis-à-vis the development efforts of developing countries. Unfortunately, current institutional structures do not effectively take on board the concerns and perspectives of developing countries in the formulation and implementation of policies, even though developing countries are most affected by such policies. Some of the telling indicators of the need for urgent and fundamental reform of the international financial and economic architecture are the large precautionary accretion of reserves by developing countries as a result of conditionality-based lending by the Bretton Woods institutions; the continuing burden of conditionalities, even after the modification of the structural adjustment by the Bretton Woods institutions; the current fragilities — if not crisis — of the financial system; the history of inappropriate advice from the Bretton Woods institutions, such as during the Asian financial crisis; the declining relevance and effectiveness of those institutions in financing for development; the continuing problems relating to external debt and debt sustainability; and the negative trends in the flow of official development assistance, which remains crucial in assisting development efforts. Such reform must enhance the voice and participation of developing countries in the decision-making and norm-setting process. The United Nations, given its unique role and legitimacy, must oversee that process through the Economic and Social Council.

The strengthened mandate of the Economic and Social Council and the need for the United Nations to play a central role in reviewing international economic, financial and trade policies — including a periodic review of the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions — from a development perspective will remain on paper unless backed up with adequate technical resources and expertise. We call for the United Nations system, particularly the secretariat of the Economic and Social Council, to be strengthened and provided with adequate resources and expertise so as to assist in the effective discharge of those activities.

We also need to consider innovative mechanisms, such as an international debt commission and a committee of experts overseen by the United Nations, to assist in accelerating the development mandate of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The latter is particularly critical, given its impact on issues that affect mankind, including public health and the benefit-sharing use of genetic resources and affordable environment-friendly technologies, which are crucial for addressing climate change.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm the importance of keeping the development agenda at the heart of United Nations efforts and of the integrated and coordinated implementation of commitments made at the major United Nations conferences and summits, through the Economic and Social Council.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 48.

Agenda item 49 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/337)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/97)

Draft resolution (A/62/L.6)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace under this agenda item at its 17th, 18th and 19th plenary meetings, on 4 and 5 October 2007.

In connection with this item, the Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director-General of UNESCO, circulated in document A/62/97.

I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.6.

Ms. Jahan (Bangladesh): I welcome this opportunity to participate in the debate on the agenda item entitled "Culture of peace" and also to introduce a draft resolution under that item.

A little while ago, we were honouring the memory of Sri Chinmoy in Conference Room 4. Sri Chinmoy dedicated 37 years of service to the United Nations and its extended global family in promoting the cause of global peace, harmony and tolerance. It is a unique coincidence that now we are deliberating here on the culture of peace — a theme that epitomizes the very essence of the efforts to save humanity from the scourges of war and conflict and to promote peace and harmony.

The culture of peace is a set of principles and conduct for a way of living designed to renounce violence and to prevent the eruption of conflicts. It also focuses on the underlying causes of conflicts. It establishes areas of strength and weakness, so that both Governments and non-governmental organizations can develop policies that will encourage a culture of peace. It attempts to solve problems through dialogue and negotiations between individuals, States and groups.

The proliferation of ethnic, religious and civil conflicts emphasizes the need for a global transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. A culture of peace can facilitate the emergence of universally shared values in a world where war and conflict continue to run rampant and international terrorism threatens the safety and security of humanity. It has enormous power to create a world order in which amity would supplant atrocity, harmony would overcome hatred and tolerance would replace prejudice.

Bangladesh enjoys a track record of religious freedom, harmony and tolerance. Our country has been at the forefront of initiatives that promote greater tolerance and understanding among peoples. That, in our view, is achievable through dialogue and cooperation.

Bangladesh was born out of a bloody conflict. We therefore see great value in the principles of tolerance, respect for diversity, democracy and understanding. Those ideals were endorsed by the United Nations membership in the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in 1999 (resolution 53/243). Bangladesh was privileged to steer that process.

Bangladesh believes that lasting peace is inconceivable without poverty alleviation and sustainable development. In the pursuit of sustained peace, we have pressed our indigenous intellectual resources into the service of development. Ideas such as microcredit and non-formal education have wrought a profound societal transformation by unleashing the entrepreneurial skills of women. Our national experience shows that gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women are categorical imperatives for development, social stability and peace.

The awarding of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize to the microcredit pioneer Professor Yunus of Grameen Bank clearly demonstrates the link between poverty alleviation, women's empowerment and peace. We stand ready to share our best practices with others.

Bangladesh has also sought to play an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Our commitment to United Nations peacekeeping remains unflinching. Bangladesh has long been among the top troop contributors.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, Bangladesh is also increasingly engaged, with peacebuilding responsibilities, in strife-torn parts of the world. We are convinced that the promotion of a culture of peace can play a significant role in sustaining peace and development. We underscore the importance of integrating the culture of peace into the operational activities of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We are already in the seventh year of the Decade. At this juncture, we wish to express our gratitude to all actors who have contributed to its promotion. Appreciation is particularly owed to the United Nations and the bodies within the Organization and beyond that have made significant contributions to facilitating the process. We are particularly thankful to non-governmental organizations and civil society.

We believe that, in order to attain the set goals, this is the time for everyone to focus more on the implementation phase. We should start assessing the progress and obstacles experienced in our efforts to promote a culture of peace. The elements of a culture of peace may vary from nation to nation as each society has its own cultural uniqueness and diversity. We need to relate these country and society-specific variables to our envisioned culture of peace and identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. This would enable us to measure the extent to which a State possesses a culture of peace. It would, in turn, help us to set goals and ascertain progress towards creating peaceful societies. Such an assessment would provide objective standards and set a benchmark that nations would strive to attain.

Against this backdrop, I now have the honour to introduce a draft resolution entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010", A/62/L.6.

The draft contains some technical updates vis-à-vis the previous year's resolution.

First, the fourteenth preambular paragraph welcomes the designation of 2 October as International Day of Non-Violence, and the fifteenth welcomes the Secretary-General's appointment of a High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. Operative paragraph 14 expresses appreciation for the participation of Member States in the High-level Dialogue on interreligious and intercultural cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion or belief and cultural diversity, held on 4 and 5 October 2007.

I would like to recall that at the General Assembly last year this resolution received a record 114 sponsors. This year the list of sponsors remains open. Existing sponsors are listed in the draft resolution. I have the honour to read out the names of the following additional sponsors: Algeria, Angola, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Gabon, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Morocco, Nepal, Panama, Philippines, Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zambia.

We are hopeful that in the course of the coming days many other delegations will accord similar support to our initiative by becoming sponsors of the draft resolution in a demonstration of global solidarity in our endeavours to achieve this noble goal.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Godinho (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this declaration.

It has now been eight years since this Assembly adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. The fact that we have just commemorated for the first time an International Day of Non-Violence, on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, demonstrates how actual and important the quest for instituting a culture of peace and non-violence remains in our time.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for transmitting the report of the Director General of UNESCO on the annual progress of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), which presents an overview of the activities carried out by UNESCO, as the lead agency for the Decade, with the participation of other United Nations entities, Governments and civil society actors. We would like to commend UNESCO for the work carried out so far, and in particular for the efforts to effectively coordinate and engage a very large number of bodies and organizations within and outside the United Nations system.

The European Union (EU) is convinced of the primary importance of education in promoting a culture of peace. It is by investing our efforts in the youngest members of our society, and also in education through life, that we can best mainstream the principles of peace, tolerance and the protection and promotion of human rights.

Education empowers every citizen of every country in the world by giving him the tools to participate more actively in his community and to shape and improve his future. It also offers the best opportunity for teaching respect and tolerance towards cultural diversity and for combating discrimination on any grounds. It is undeniable that education plays a very important role in changing mindsets and behavioural patterns. It should be used even more to foster a culture of peace.

Human rights education is particularly relevant in this context. As we approach the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is of grave concern that universal and effective recognition and observance of the rights and freedoms proclaimed in it remain to be realized. Being aware of one's own human rights is an important contribution to ensure the long overdue full implementation of the Universal Declaration. That is why the European Union welcomes the Human Rights Council's recently adopted first phase of implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, and we hope that we can all join efforts in supporting this and other initiatives to achieve our goal. In this regard, we very much look forward to the regional European meeting on the World Programme for Human Rights Education that is to be organized next week by the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNESCO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Gender mainstreaming and action to ensure equality between women and men are also very important aspects in promoting a culture of peace. We welcome the role played by UNESCO in supporting the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. We also welcome the increasing emphasis on the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and in particular young girls, as demonstrated by the focus of the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

As for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, we are initiating the first year of implementation of the recommendations on the United Nations Study on Violence Against Children, which has been a strong catalyst for change. The European Union hopes that at this session the Assembly will seize the opportunity of the present situation to agree on the establishment of a high-level mechanism to promote the further implementation of those recommendations.

An essential aspect of promoting a culture of peace, recognized by the Programme of Action on that subject, is the work to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity by promoting dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/62/337), which highlights activities carried out by key United Nations entities involved in the field. As the European Union has stated in the Assembly's recent High-level Dialogue on interreligious and intercultural understanding and cooperation for peace,

> "The importance of intercivilizational understanding is strongly reflected in European Union policy and action. The EU is active in promoting intercultural and interreligious understanding, both within Europe and with international partners". (A/62/PV.17, p. 24)

The EU fully supports the Alliance of Civilizations initiative aimed at improving understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples, across cultures and religions and, in the process, helping to counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism.

The European Union welcomes the appointment by the Secretary-General of former President Jorge Sampaio as High Representative for the Alliance and appreciate that the action-oriented implementation plan he developed is already being implemented by the Alliance, in partnership with Governments, international and regional organizations, civil society groups, foundations and the private sector. We look forward to the first international forum of the Alliance, to be held in Spain in January 2008, and the further contribution of this initiative to our common goals.

Mr. Al Khalifa (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The State of Kuwait welcomes all the efforts that are being made in the area of strengthening the culture of peace by Member States of the United Nations, as well as the major role the General Assembly is assuming in this respect. Here, we would like to recall the efforts undertaken by UNESCO for its contribution to the development of a favourable environment for the culture of peace to thrive in the world. We express our gratitude to all the States that supported Kuwait's candidature for membership in the Executive Council of UNESCO during the recent elections in Paris. I also wish to affirm my country's continued support for UNESCO by all means and in all its areas of work.

Kuwait believes that people are not born with a mentality of strife and hatred, but rather that political strife and conflicts for personal interests are the main sources that feed the mind with the culture of violence. Since it is the responsibility of States and international organizations to raise awareness about the vital importance of rejecting violence, it is imperative to take into consideration the vital and central role of the media and educational institutions in creating a generation free of thoughts of violence and hatred and in contributing effectively to spreading the culture of peace.

We all recognize that our world is composed of peoples, cultures and religions that share many principles yet differ on others. Here, I wish to stress the utmost importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue in enhancing the mutual respect and acceptance of various cultures, and the importance of considering cultural diversity as a source of enrichment for human civilization. In this respect, my country commends the High-level Dialogue on interreligious and intercultural understanding and cooperation for peace, called for by the Secretary-General at the General Assembly, earlier this month, as well as the outcome of that Dialogue.

Instigating hatred and fanaticism only breeds more of the same and sets back the efforts for peace and constructive interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Here, my delegation condemns the campaign against Islam in which some American universities are currently taking part. We warn of the consequences of such behaviour and call for unity against the manipulation of universities for racial purposes.

Respect for and acceptance of different cultures and religions, as well as fostering dialogue among them, will generate thoughts of peace within societies, while provocations through offences to religions and cultures, blaspheming their symbols and accusing them of encouraging terrorist practices, will only generate hatred, rancour and a desire for revenge. Revival of racial feuds, religious strife and incitement to hatred represents a serious threat to our aspirations in spreading the ideas of peace and love. It requires firm opposition from our international Organization.

In this regard, we affirm what was stated in General Assembly resolution 61/221, regarding the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, which was endorsed by my Government, particularly as it relates to combating all forms of fanaticism and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, in addition to the importance of respecting religious and cultural diversity and that of international cooperation in this regard.

Here I would like to highlight the efforts undertaken by the State of Kuwait to project the true meaning and tolerance of Islam by spreading the moderate middle ground of Islam. The Kuwaiti Council of Ministers established a special committee to promote our Islamic moderate middle ground. This committee held several international meetings outside of Kuwait, the most recent of which was in Washington last November. Some Muslim scholars participated in that meeting, discussing the true meaning of the Islamic faith and the promotion of the culture of peace in the context of Islam and its religious tolerance.

Development is the real way to achieve peace. On this basis, my country affirms that the best means to spread the culture of peace is the joint work in support of the goals of sustainable development in order to avoid the causes of conflicts.

Half the States emerging from conflict risk regression into conflict. Furthermore, the root causes of conflict will remain a threat to peace unless solutions to them are found. I would like to emphasize the importance of supporting efforts of peacebuilding in helping countries emerging from conflict. In this context, my country commends the efforts by the Peacebuilding Commission and we will continue to support it, having contributed $500,000 to the Peacebuilding Fund.

In closing, my country's delegation wishes to reaffirm that respect for human rights, the application of equality and providing equal opportunities for all segments of society and freedom of expression form the basic pillars for the culture of peace. It is not possible to consolidate a culture of peace if people suffer from the lack of those rights. My country calls upon all States to adhere to these principles in order to create a world where future generations can progress and live in prosperity and well-being.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): I would like to express my pleasure at the success of the High-level Dialogue that was held at the beginning of this month. It made clear once again that people of different races, religions, and cultures can coexist peacefully, both within and beyond national borders. It also provided participants with a valuable opportunity to hear about the important efforts that are being made in this area by the private sector.

The statements made at the High-level Dialogue, both by delegations and by representatives of the private sector, gave us food for thought about what we need to do if we are to create a culture of peace. While unfortunately there may be something in human nature that leads people to discriminate against, exclude, or attack those who have different religions or cultural backgrounds, such differences do not have to lead to conflict, as many speakers have pointed out. On the other hand, all too often the response to people who are different is hostility, which, combined with politics, can lead people to take up arms and sometimes embrace terrorism.

As some delegations pointed out, it is wrong for any of us to think we have unique access to the truth. We must avoid imposing our beliefs on others or exercising our rights without giving due consideration to their views.

In adopting its Constitution, Japan renounced war and the use or threat of use of force as a means of resolving international conflicts. In keeping with that commitment, in the sixty years that have passed since the conclusion of the Second World War, Japan has strived to prevent the development of a political basis for conflict, and even strives to eliminate it. And Japan also works to avoid the generation of the kind of hostility that would make a culture of peace impossible.

To this end, for example, Japan has hosted the World Civilization Forum and the Seminar for Inter-Civilizational Dialogue with the Islamic World, dispatched an exchange and dialogue mission to the Middle East and invited people involved with Islamic boarding schools to visit our country. We also support the conferences on the Dialogue Among Civilizations led by UNESCO and, in addition, have become a member of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilization.

Education has an important role to play in preventing the generation of hostility and hatred. It must be impressed on everyone in the world that there are many religions and cultures and that tolerance is therefore essential if international peace and security are to be realized and human rights and fundamental freedoms secured.

The cooperation of the mass media is also essential. So it is important to continue to convene the International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The seminar was held in Tokyo last June.

It is likewise crucial to continue to engage in interreligious and intercultural dialogue at all levels, including the national and regional levels. Needless to say, the cooperation of the private sector here, as in so many other areas, is needed.

Advocating and actually creating a culture of peace are two different matters. If a culture of peace is ever to be realized, we will need adequate social capital. Thus, we need to foster democracy and human rights and legal standards such as those set forth in Japan's Constitution. At the same time, it is necessary to improve human capital, as, by doing so, we foster personal independence and the dignity of the individual through education and ethical treatment. We believe that those two kinds of capital complement each other and help to create a culture of peace.

I would like to talk now about human security. Human security is what a society achieves by protecting and empowering every individual, ensuring that each one is free from fear and want. The goal of human security has much in common with the goal of a culture of peace, namely, the satisfaction of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this sense, human security improves and enriches human capital. We are therefore convinced that in order to build a culture of peace, human security is important.

To help bring about a functioning culture of peace, Japan provides support of various kinds to developing countries. Recently, for example, it has been making a particularly great effort to achieve and maintain post-conflict peace, an interest that is also reflected in Japan's chairing the Peacebuilding Commission.

Turning to another area, since at least 1993, when it hosted the first Tokyo International Conference on African Development, Japan has devoted considerable energy to the development of Africa. At the fourth conference, which will be held in Yokohama in May of next year, one of the principal themes to be discussed will be establishing peace through human security. We intend to do everything in our power to work with the nations of Africa to help construct a culture of peace.

Finally, to promote peace in the Middle East, Japan has been promoting the framework of what we call a "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity". Under this framework, an agro-industrial park would be established in the West Bank with a distribution centre to be built to receive and transport goods. Our aim is to bring the parties together, here and in all of the places in the world where there is now conflict, by creating economic prosperity and, once again, a culture of peace.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): "Peace is one of humanity's most precious needs. It is also the United Nations' highest calling". Those are the opening words of the message of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, on 21 September 2007, the International Day of Peace. These words of wisdom serve most fittingly as a guide to our debate today on agenda item 49 entitled "Culture of peace". The Secretary-General concluded his message with an admonition:

> "On this International Day, let us promise to make peace not just a priority, but a passion. Let us pledge to do more, wherever we are, in whatever way we can, to make every day a day of peace".

Those words must inspire us to look for or explore every possible avenue or initiative at the international, regional and national levels to promote and preserve peace so as to make every day a day of peace in all parts of the world. Complementary initiatives for peace should therefore be encouraged and allowed to blossom.

The General Assembly's High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, held on 4 and 5 October 2007, was the first in the history of the United Nations. It has taken the United Nations more than 60 years to recognize the potential and power of interfaith and intercultural collaboration to contribute immensely to the attainment of the lofty goals and vision of the United Nations, which was formed out of the horrible experience of war.

On the eve of the High-level Dialogue, the Secretary-General issued a report (A/62/337) announcing the much-awaited designation of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs as the focal unit in the Secretariat mandated to deal with intergovernmental and United Nations system-wide processes on interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation for peace, in accordance with resolution 61/221.

In addition to the recently concluded High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, two related developments occurred this year at the regional level. First, 15 countries of Asia and the Pacific region held their third Asia-Pacific Interfaith Dialogue conference in Waitangi, New Zealand, in May and adopted a Declaration affirming, among other things, the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the promotion of regional peace and security, social and economic development and human dignity. Secondly, 43 countries of Europe and Asia converged in Nanjing, China, in June to participate in the third Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Interfaith Dialogue forum, which adopted the Nanjing Statement on Interfaith Dialogue. It underscored the ASEM leaders' recognition of the importance of interfaith dialogue in building harmony and understanding within the international community.

In other regions, countries and communities, interfaith dialogue and cooperation are being carried out at both the governmental and non-governmental levels as an option that complements existing mechanisms and processes aimed at achieving enduring peace, sustained development and enhanced human dignity, which are the three pillars of the United Nations.

It is incumbent upon the United Nations, as the highest Organization made up of representatives of all nations, to provide a multilateral framework or set of principles for cooperation at the regional and national levels, lest we end up in an endless cycle of debates or rhetorical discourse or in a fruitless search for an elusive peace.

Interfaith dialogues and cooperation for peace have recorded successes around the world. The World Conference on Religion and Peace initiated national interreligious councils that supported the de-escalation and settlement of conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Liberia and other conflict-stricken countries. In Cambodia, the Buddhist monk Maha Chosnanda initiated and inspired a peace and reconciliation movement following the Khmer Rouge reign of terror. The Christian Council of Churches in Madagascar was instrumental in the peaceful overthrow of the totalitarian regime there in the early 1990s.

In Mozambique, the lay Catholic movement Sant'Egidio became involved in mediation efforts at the peak of the 1989 civil war, resulting in the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement. Sant'Egidio also played constructive roles in Albania, Kosovo, Lebanon and other countries of Latin America and Africa. In South Africa, religious leaders typified by Desmond Tutu helped bring that country from apartheid to democracy. In Benin, Archbishop Isidore de Souza helped ensure the country's transition from dictatorship to democracy in the late 1980s. In Iraq, the Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani is well known for his position against kidnapping and violence. The Quakers, one of the historic peace churches, effectively mediated between parties in Nigeria, Uganda and other countries.

There have certainly been other cases in other countries where interfaith cooperation has resulted in effective peacemaking. In my own country, the Philippines, the late Archbishop Cardinal Sin led the peaceful People Power revolution in 1986, which toppled the dictatorship without any blood being spilled in the streets. Our Bishops-Ulama Conference, the first of its kind in the world, is our Government's partner in pursuing the peace process in southern Philippines. Our National Committee on Interfaith Cooperation oversees the implementation of our national plan of action on interfaith cooperation. With regard to civil society, the Philippine Interfaith Commission is actively involved in promoting not only peaceful coexistence, but also the sustained development of communities.

Equally as important as peacemaking — a remedial measure to alleviate or end the scourge of conflict — is conflict prevention. It is also in this field that interfaith cooperation should be carried out, in particular by focusing interfaith energies on development. Interfaith dialogue and cooperation should be a partnership between Governments and civil society. It should set aside theological or doctrinal issues and focus instead on shared concerns such as health, education, employment, humanitarian assistance and other development-related problems.

In conclusion, my delegation invites input from like-minded delegations to flesh out the concepts that I have mentioned for possible inclusion in the draft resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace that the Philippines and Pakistan are currently formulating to update resolution 61/221 and that we will submit early next month.

Mr. Elbakly (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly is meeting today to reaffirm the international community's commitment to strengthening the culture of peace and universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without any distinctions as to race, gender, language or religion. This meeting follows the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, held earlier this month. The Dialogue reaffirmed the conviction that respect for the cultural diversity is a point of departure for launching a constructive international dialogue that permits mutual understanding and underscores the commitment to fostering a spirit of tolerance, disseminating knowledge and correcting misconceptions, particularly among young people, in the belief that humanity cannot make further progress without communication between societies, however different and diverse their cultural and intellectual backgrounds may be.

Given the many international initiatives to address this issue, it has become essential to redouble our efforts to coordinate them. That includes supporting the activities of the High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Alliance of Civilizations That includes supporting the activities of the High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Alliance of Civilizations and the work of the Secretariat Office designated as a focal point to liaise with relevant entities of the United Nations system. In the forefront is UNESCO, which places the spreading of a culture of peace at the top of its priorities, and which is playing a major role in encouraging cooperation between Governments and the relevant United Nations agencies, programmes and funds. We hope that efforts to spread a culture of peace and to instil the ideals of tolerance and peaceful coexistence will continue throughout and beyond the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

One of the major phenomena accompanying globalization is the migration of men and women, with their diverse thoughts and beliefs, from one society to another. This has contributed to the emergence in the West of a growing interest in understanding other cultures, especially the Islamic culture. But, this interest unfortunately focuses on the negative rather than the positive, even though Islamic civilization's great contributions to the cultural and intellectual enrichment and advancement of the West attest to those positive aspects. As a result, some Western nations have taken a confrontational approach in dealing with Islamic culture, including by ridiculing its symbols and values on the pretext of exercising freedom of opinion and expression. That is combined with attempts to associate Islam with extremism, violence and terrorism. Moreover, the media sometimes portray Islam in a negative light, igniting hatred and blocking the spread of a the culture of peace.

Undoubtedly, the most perilous challenge to international peace and security is the proliferation of violence and the use of force as a means of expression. This is largely due to the inability of the international community, particularly the United Nations, to settle chronic political and economic problems. This failure breeds feelings of injustice, oppression and double standards, which impede the spread of the culture of peace. They are provoked by the attempts of some to impose their narrow views on promoting democracy, political reform and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms based on the illusion that their values, culture and justice systems are superior to others.

Peace is not merely a philosophy or a principle. It is a way of life and a code of civilized behaviour for the good of mankind. The advancement of our common purpose — to spread a culture of peace and the ideals of tolerance and peaceful coexistence — obliges us to confront the attempts of some to impose cultural hegemony in order to advance their narrow political goals and interests. It necessitates unified action to face malicious allegations that portray cultural differences between societies as catalysts for conflict. It also requires us to promote respect for the rights of migrants in receiving societies on an equal footing with other citizens and without discrimination or racism.

Concurrently, we have to redouble our efforts within the United Nations system to resolve such problems and to assist developing countries in realizing their peoples' legitimate aspirations to sustainable development and prosperity within an international framework characterized by democracy and equality. This in turn requires us to consolidate our efforts in the various areas of disarmament, ranging from nuclear weapons to small arms and other conventional weapons. In this regard, the United Nations must develop the ability to deal with the roots of conflict, mainly by broadening cooperation between all relevant United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes on the one hand and regional and subregional organizations on the other.

In our view, the cooperation we desire between international and regional systems can offer an effective early warning mechanism and a way to buttress the preventive diplomacy efforts for which former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali called, including in his 1992 Agenda for Peace (A/47/277). That is the same philosophy upon which the Secretary-General's recent initiative to enhance the work of the Organization in the field of preventive diplomacy rests. This entails that we concentrate on narrowing the gap between North and South without attaching conditionalities that overburden the developing countries or link the imposition of certain social or cultural concepts to development assistance.

We have to work side by side to rectify the balance of power among the principal organs of the United Nations in a manner that supports the role of the General Assembly as the Organization's most democratic and representative organ. We must also strengthen the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in approaching peacebuilding from an integrated and multidimensional perspective in order to smooth the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, and encourage the Commission to continue its efforts to spread a culture of peace in societies emerging from conflict.

It is equally imperative that we support the work of the Human Rights Council without politicization, selectivity or double standards. We must adopt decisions ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in our campaign against terrorism, while concentrating on efforts to combat the roots of this despicable phenomenon and to eliminate violence and extremism. It is only through deepening dialogue, mutual understanding and education, and within the framework of partnership and cooperation with non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the whole spectrum of civil society that we can contribute to building a culture of peace in the minds of people.

As we celebrate, on 10 December 2007, the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to the lofty principles that we established together 60 years ago. The first of these is that the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. This can be achieved only through the spread of a culture of peace.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his report on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/62/337), which highlights the activities carried out by the key United Nations entities involved in the field of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

I would also like to commend the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its recent comprehensive report, contained in document A/62/97, which reflects a broad range of activities carried out by the United Nations system, international institutions and civil society in implementing various programmes and initiatives to promote and implement the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

The outcome document (resolution 60/1) adopted at the 2005 World Summit called on countries to take action to promote a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations at the local, national, regional and international levels. Kazakhstan acclaims the significant work of the United Nations and its agencies in addressing challenges and seeking ways forward in order to find policies, structures and programmes that can foster a culture of peace.

We welcome the outcomes of the informal thematic debate of the General Assembly on "Civilizations and the challenge for peace: obstacles and opportunities" and the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, which were held this year.

Implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace has a crucial role in achieving the goals of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

We believe that education is one of the basic requirements for promoting tolerance and a culture of peace. Preventing intolerance and conflict can be achieved through tireless efforts in day-to-day activities and by taking timely, concrete actions at all levels. In that context, we commend UNESCO for its leading role in fostering the use of information and communication technologies to promote peace education on issues related to non-violence, tolerance and mutual understanding.

We believe that developing textbooks that teach cultural and religious tolerance while ensuring access to communication and information technologies are the most important preconditions for fostering tolerance and a culture of peace. The media also has an important role to play in supporting the global campaign for a culture of peace.

We share the vision of the need for fostering a culture of tolerance. Respect for cultures, traditions, customs and religious sentiments of other nations is an important condition for peace, mutual understanding and friendship among peoples and countries. The principle of tolerance in Kazakhstan is not only a norm of political culture, but also one of the key principles of the State, which we decisively support and strengthen. We created our own model for preserving and strengthening interethnic and inter-religious concord. The centuries-old culture of harmonious coexistence of the Kazakh people with representatives of other religions and cultures is a norm and a natural pattern of behaviour of our people. The Government of Kazakhstan's policy to preserve and promote a climate of tolerance and accord in society constitutes an integral part of international efforts to foster the culture of peace and tolerance.

Interfaith dialogue is an integral part of efforts to promote the culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations. In Kazakhstan, we are convinced that the efforts to strengthen peace and security increasingly depend on the pursuit of dialogue and interaction among peoples of different faiths, cultures and traditions. We strongly believe that people of faith can help bridge the chasms of ignorance, fear and misunderstanding and set an example of interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

On 12 and 13 September 2006, the Second Congress of World and Traditional Religions took place in Astana. The Congress adopted a declaration to enhance the role and responsibility of religious leaders in the strengthening of international security. The Congress has become Kazakhstan's contribution to global dialogue among religions. Here I would like to reiterate the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan to hold the Third Congress of religious leaders in 2009 under the auspices of the United Nations. We also express hope that our proposal to declare one of the upcoming years as an international year of dialogue among religions and cultures will be supported by United Nations Member States.

Kazakhstan appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General and United Nations Member States to make positive contributions to a culture of peace and stands ready to collaborate with the international community in implementing the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Mr. Tugio (Indonesia): We are thankful to the Director-General of UNESCO for preparing the report on the implementation of resolution 61/45 as transmitted by the Secretary-General in document A/62/97 of 28 June 2007. My delegation wishes to further express our appreciation to UNESCO and other institutions of the United Nations system for their numerous initiatives in the last few years to promote a culture of peace. The report before us fully affirms the active involvement of Governments, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, as well as the media, in the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world.

In this era of globalization and interdependence, economic, social and cultural issues contribute significantly to peace and security. This is why efforts to promote a culture of peace represent an important response to increased interaction among all cultures and civilizations.

Indonesia attaches great importance to the various United Nations initiatives for strengthening freedom, justice, tolerance, cooperation and respect for the diversity of cultures and religions, because all these are important elements for building a strong foundation for international peace and security. We therefore note with satisfaction the growing worldwide interest in interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation for the promotion of peace, development and human dignity.

Major international events that have taken place across the region this year reflect our concerted efforts to meet that noble objective. Such events include the Second Forum on Interfaith Dialogue for Peace, Development and Human Dignity, which was held in Waitangi, New Zealand, in May; the Third Interfaith Dialogue of the Asia-Europe Meeting, in Nanjing, China, in June; the second Global Inter-media Dialogue, held in Norway in June, and the Ministerial Meeting on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Tehran in September. We also welcome the appointment by the Secretary-General of the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. These and other similar initiatives can serve as instruments for promoting peace, tolerance and mutual understanding among peoples of different cultural and religious backgrounds.

As a heterogeneous country itself, Indonesia is a firm believer in the merit of dialogue and the culture of peace. This is why we have been very active in sponsoring dialogue on interfaith cooperation at the regional, interregional and global levels. Furthermore, the Government supports the efforts of non-governmental actors working in various areas to promote interreligious harmony.

In a country of great diversity and size, we celebrate diversity as a blessing. Our centuries-old traditions of *musyawarah* and *mufakat* — which stand for consultation and consensus, respectively — have been our way of dealing with pluralism and making it benefit everyone.

Indonesia also fully recognizes the modern tools of education in promoting harmony in diversity. With that tool, we seek to sensitize younger generations to the similarities in all religions and cultures, rather than the differences that may otherwise be used as an excuse for acrimony. In that regard, my delegation supports the recommendations in the UNESCO report, particularly the need for Member States to increase efforts at developing curricula, textbooks and activities that teach cultural and religious tolerance.

We also attach great importance to the role of the media in nurturing social harmony and my delegation supports the recommendation in the report for Member States to encourage the media to support at the international and national levels the global campaign for a culture of peace as well as dialogue among civilizations, cultures and people.

The delegation of Indonesia believes in the continued potential of such a global campaign, be it of an interreligious, intercultural or intercivilizational nature. We should applaud practical actions such as translating the shared values of peace, compassion and tolerance through the fields of education, culture, media, religion and society. These open up opportunities for us to work towards harmony and tolerance in interpersonal as well as inter-State relationships. It is in that context that my delegation looks forward to the eventual adoption, by consensus, of the draft resolution contained in document A/62/L.6.

The Acting President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): This Organization was born out of the ashes of a world war unique in its untold outrages against the dignity of the human person. It is therefore fitting that the opening lines of the Charter enshrine the immediate link between peace and the respect for fundamental human rights.

Achievements in the field of human rights, exemplified by the core international human rights treaties, indicate that the inseparability between peace and respect for the rights and dignity of the person is now accepted as self-evident, universal and inalienable. The recognition of the existence of fundamental human rights necessarily presupposes a universal and transcendent truth about man that is not only prior to all human activity, but also determines it.

At the interpersonal level, human dignity requires that we treat all as equal to ourselves. The golden rule of doing unto others as you want others to do unto you carries the same principle of fundamental equality, which precedes and transcends all characteristics that distinguish us one from the other, be they race, culture or religion.

At the international level, this common dignity also determines the just measure of national interests. They interrelate and may never be considered absolute. In order to promote and defend them, it is not only never right to harm the legitimate interests of other States, but there is also an obligation to help promote and defend the common good of all people. Thus, respect for human dignity is the deepest ethical foundation in our search for peace and in the construction of international relations that correspond to the requirements of our common humanity. Forgetting or partially and selectively accepting this core principle is at the origin of conflicts, of environmental degradation and of social and economic injustices.

Human rights are grounded in the objective requirements of nature bestowed upon man. In this context, laws contrary to human dignity may never be passed, and progress in every field should not be measured by what is possible, but by its compatibility with human dignity. Respect for the right to life at every stage, from conception to natural death, firmly establishes the principle that life is not at anyone's disposal. Our capacity to distinguish between what we can dispose of and what we cannot is most challenged when it comes to protecting life in its most vulnerable phases. This is the rule with which to measure respect for human dignity.

It is in this continuum of the respect for life that the abolition of the death penalty should be seen. It is also within this framework that, even in the midst of war, all must respect international humanitarian law.

When, despite every effort, war does break out, the essential principles of humanity must be safeguarded, and norms of conduct must be established to limit the damage as much as possible and minimize the suffering of civilians and of all the victims of conflicts.

In the same manner that the right to life cannot be disposed of at will, the right to religious freedom cannot be subject to human caprice. In this regard, the difficulties that many followers of various religions still frequently encounter in freely exercising their right to religious freedom is a disturbing symptom of a lack of peace. Not only are they prevented from publicly exercising this right, but they are actually persecuted and subjected to violence in some places. A fundamental human right is violated, with serious repercussions for peaceful coexistence, when a State imposes a single religion upon everyone, prohibiting all others, or when a secular system denigrates religious beliefs and denies public space to religion.

On their part, religions are called on to work for peace and to foster reconciliation among peoples. Faced with a world lacerated by conflict, religions must never become a vehicle of hatred, and can never justify evil and violence while invoking the name of God.

The Charter calls on this Organization to exercise leadership in the promotion of human rights. In doing so, it must not lose sight of the principle that these rights are held to be true, not because a decision-making body says so, but because they flow from the inalienable dignity of every human person.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker on the debate on this item. Before concluding, I would like to inform members that, at the request of the sponsors, action on draft resolution A/62/L.6 will be taken at a later date to be announced.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 49.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

United Nations A/62/PV.40

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

40th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 31 October 2007, 10.17 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim .... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 45

Sport for peace and development

(a) Sport for peace and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/325 and Corr.1)

(b) Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Draft resolution A/62/L.2

The President: I would like to say that I assume that the Olympic spirit will prevail today, as Pierre de Coubertin would have liked, and that attendance by Member States will be more impressive.

I give the floor to the representative of China to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.2.

Mr. Liu Qi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): As President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the 29th Olympiad, and on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I have the great honour to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

The Olympic Truce, a time-honoured tradition, has its roots in the Olympic truce treaty among Greek city-states participating in the ancient Olympic games, which had a history of more than 1,000 years. The treaty was thus observed longer than any other peace accord in history. The modern Olympic movement, which came into being in 1894, has inherited the traditions of the ancient Olympic games. At its very heart lies the pledge to safeguard world peace and promote the common development of mankind, while at the same time upholding the Olympic spirit: swifter, higher, stronger.

The United Nations and the Olympic Movement are natural allies. The Olympic ideal accords with the United Nations purpose of promoting peace. Since 1993, the General Assembly has adopted seven resolutions on the Olympic Truce, urging all Member States to observe the Truce. The United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), adopted in 2000, also urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce and to support the promotion of peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic ideal.

All of that amply demonstrates that the United Nations and its Member States attach great importance to the role played by sport and the Olympic ideal in promoting world peace and that they hope to create a favourable atmosphere and conditions for the success of the Olympic Games.

In line with past practice, China, as the host country for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, has proposed the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/62/L.2). The draft resolution not only captures the quintessential elements of previous resolutions, but also features the three main concepts

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07-57301 (E)

that are at the core of the Beijing Olympic Games, namely, the Green Olympics, the High-tech Olympics and the People's Olympics, and their vision to achieve a harmonious development of society. It recognizes the increasingly important role of sport in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and reaffirms the commitments undertaken in this regard by the heads of State and Government gathered at the 2005 World Summit. The draft resolution urges Member States to observe the Olympic Truce during the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing, which will take place from 8 to 24 August 2008, and the subsequent Paralympic Games in Beijing, which will take place from 6 to 17 September 2008.

The draft resolution also welcomes efforts of the International Olympic Committee and the National Olympic Committees of United Nations Member States to undertake concrete actions to promote and strengthen a culture of peace and harmony based on the spirit of the Olympic Truce and calls upon all Member States to continue to use sport as an instrument to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation.

China has received constructive comments and suggestions from many delegations during the consultations on the draft resolution. The draft resolution is sponsored by 183 countries. On behalf of the Chinese Government and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, I would like to convey my thanks to all countries for their support for the draft resolution. It is my sincere hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus. The adoption of the draft resolution will help enhance appreciation and understanding by all peoples of the Olympic ideal of peace and will contribute to world peace.

The Olympic Truce is not only the ideal of the Olympic movement but also the common aspiration of all peace-loving peoples around the world. The theme of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad — "One world, one dream" — and its core concepts of the Green Olympics, the High-tech Olympics and the People's Olympics give full expression to the common desire of the Chinese people and peoples of the entire world for peace, progress, friendly relations and harmonious development. To that end, the Beijing Organizing Committee has launched various activities to promote the Olympic Truce, enhance understanding of the Olympic Truce in China and throughout the world and increase the influence of the Olympic ideal of peace.

We have organized a series of events to promote the concept of peace, including the campaign to solicit songs for the Olympic Games; the "Fuwa — the Olympic mascots — bring good luck to the world" campaign; and an Olympic sculpture exhibition. We have named the Olympic torch relay the Journey of Harmony, a name that captures the vision of peace, harmony and cooperation. We have distributed Olympic readers and wall charts to schools designated Olympic Education Model Schools, and have launched the Heart-to-Heart Partnership Programme and a Beijing Olympic Youth Camp. These educational programmes are sowing the seeds of peace, friendship and progress among the public, in particular among young people. During the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games, a wall for peace and friendship will be erected at the Olympic and Paralympic villages to collect signatures from athletes and other people and to appeal for observance of the Olympic Truce and the promotion of world peace.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its President, Mr. Jacques Rogge, have been working tirelessly to promote the Olympic ideal of peace. I take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for their commitment. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the IOC and the parties concerned, the International Olympic Truce Foundation and the International Olympic Truce Centre have been established, contributing to the promotion of the Olympic ideal of peace worldwide.

We also thank Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, for his hard work, and we will continue to support the work of his Office.

Peace and development are two major themes in today's world. Unfortunately, regional conflicts and local turbulence still occur, making our quest for world peace more of an uphill journey. The Olympic Games may not change the world overnight, but we have every reason to expect that the Olympic Truce, an ancient Olympic tradition, will continue to inspire the world in striving for lasting peace and common prosperity.

I wish to take this opportunity to call on all Member States to adhere to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, to observe the Olympic Truce and to promote world peace. In 282 days, the Olympic

Flame — burning bright for solidarity, friendship and peace — will be lit in the main stadium of the Beijing Olympic Games. That is of great significance both to the Olympic Movement and to China, an ancient civilization with a time-honoured history. The international community looks forward to the success of the Beijing Olympic Games. At present, all of the preparatory work is taking place as scheduled. All the venues will be complete by the end of the year, except for the National Stadium, which will be ready in early 2008 in accordance with plans for the opening ceremony.

The Beijing Olympic competition schedule has been finalized. To facilitate the coverage of the Games by the foreign media, last year the Chinese Government formulated regulations on reporting activities in China by foreign journalists during the Beijing Olympic Games and the preparatory period. In addition, various programmes are already up and running, including preparations for the opening and closing ceremonies, the torch relay outside the Chinese mainland, media and communications, Olympic education and culture, and volunteer training.

I am convinced that, with the support of all United Nations Member States and their peoples, the games of the twenty-ninth Olympiad will surely be a complete success.

The President: I would like to warmly welcome Mr. Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee to the General Assembly, and Mr. Liu Qi, President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the Twenty-Ninth Olympiad.

Today, the General Assembly will hold a debate under agenda item 49, "Sport for peace and development", and consider draft resolution A/62/L.2 regarding the contribution that the Olympics can make to that overarching goal.

In 2005, world leaders committed to promoting the role of sport in creating peace, achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and improving public health. The convening power of sport is unsurpassed, even by the United Nations. While the United Nations has 192 Member States, the Association of National Olympic Committees has 205 members. As the President of the Beijing Organizing Committee, Mr. Liu Qi, rightly pointed out, the United Nations and the Olympic Movement are natural allies.

Sport helps to break down social, religious and ethnic barriers by promoting tolerance and mutual understanding. Sport can change lives for the better by building self-esteem, leadership skills, community spirit and bridges across ethnic and communal divides. When teams and individuals come together to share their common passion for sport, everyday differences are set aside. Rivalries remain, but they are fought over goals, fastest times or longest jumps. Sporting spectacles provide the opportunity to transcend everyday differences for the crowds that come to enjoy them.

Sport has also sometimes played a decisive role in diplomatic life and in re-establishing good relationships between countries. That is the embodiment of the ancient Greek concept of ekecheria, or "Olympic Truce". The General Assembly considers this concept to be an important part of promoting international understanding and maintaining peace. The fact that there are over 180 sponsors of the draft resolution on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal is a testament to the universal nature of sport and its importance in human society.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate China on the honour of holding the twenty-ninth Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008. The main themes of the Games — "Green Olympics", "High-tech Olympics" and "People's Olympics" — are strongly supported by this house. I recently visited the Olympic sites in Beijing and noticed with great pleasure the enthusiasm and pride on the faces of the Chinese people who are constructing them.

Sport contributes to economic and social development. It improves health and personal growth, in particular for young people, and provides real alternatives to violence and crime. The United Nations works closely with the International Olympic Committee to develop strategic partnerships with the international sport community to promote education, health, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender equality, environmental protection, peace and reconciliation.

The Secretary-General's report, entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/325), sets out many concrete examples of initiatives that Member States, United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector have undertaken to promote the agenda to implement the three-year Action Plan nationally and internationally. I would like to commend those Member States that have reported taking concrete steps to enhance national policies and strategies that advance sport for development and peace, including by addressing gender equality and women's empowerment.

I would also like to note the work undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia to use sport to bring previously warring factions together; by the United Nations Population Fund, working with national Governments and sports associations to use sport as a vehicle to promote life skills and responsible sexual behaviour to prevent HIV/AIDS; and by the United Nations Development Programme to mobilize resources to achieve the MDGs in Africa, Asia and Latin America by organizing football matches against poverty, and in Burundi, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, where sport has been integrated into post-conflict and humanitarian programmes.

However, the Secretary-General recommends a more systematic follow-up by all Member States and United Nations bodies to more effectively use sport as a tool to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and greater recognition of its value to promote healthy lives and peace.

If we are going to build a world of greater tolerance, mutual understanding and peace, sport must continue to be used to channel energies away from aggression and self-destruction and into learning and self-respect. That is, indeed, the essence of the Olympic spirit and ideal.

Mrs. Moutawakel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a privilege for me to address the Assembly in my capacity as Minister for Youth and Sport of the Government of His Majesty the King of Morocco, and as an Olympic champion and member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Ever since the establishment of ekecheria, or "Olympic Truce", in ancient Greece, the permanent immunity of the Olympia sanctuary has been recognized. Athletes, artists and their families, as well as ordinary pilgrims, were able to travel safely in order to participate in and attend the Olympic Games and then return home. As the opening of the Games approached, the sacred Truce was advocated and announced by people travelling from one citadel to another to transmit the message.

It is on the basis of that ancient international agreement that the IOC took the initiative of ensuring respect for the Olympic Truce, with the support of the General Assembly, in a world where armed conflicts are constantly increasing. Thus, at its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted on 25 October 1993 a resolution on respect for the Olympic Truce, of which the Kingdom of Morocco was a co-sponsor. At that session — a historic one for the Olympic Movement — another resolution was adopted proclaiming 1994 as the International Year for Sport and the Olympic Ideal, commemorating the centenary of the IOC, founded in 1894 at the Sorbonne University in Paris by the French pedagogue Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

It seems clear to me that the basic principles of the Olympic Charter are very closely linked to the objectives of the United Nations. The effort to educate and protect young people so that they can help build a better and peaceful world is a noble objective that the Kingdom of Morocco has always supported by sponsoring United Nations resolutions in that area. The social and universal dimension of sport has been frequently stressed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, as evidenced by the special importance that the Government of Morocco attaches to making all sports available to everyone throughout the country for the well-being of young people and the population as a whole.

Sport is an instrument that can usefully serve to promote peace, dialogue, reconciliation, solidarity and the search for diplomatic and peaceful solutions. Sport also involves competition and an effort to surpass not only an adversary, but oneself as well. It represents a civilized approach involving civilized behaviour in strict respect for rules.

Many United Nations institutions have successfully cooperated with the Olympic Movement in the humanitarian sphere by popularizing measures through the spokesmanship of world-renowned athletes. The United Nations has also worked to promote sport for the building of peace. The substantial contribution of sport to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals has not only been highlighted, but is stressed in resolution 55/2 of

8 September 2000, entitled United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Sport is a human right. The Charter of Physical Education and Sport, adopted by UNESCO in 1978, stipulates that all human beings have the fundamental right to physical education and sport. Similarly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women also stresses the importance of access to sport. Women have the right and the capacity to be involved at all levels of social life. It is therefore our duty to expand the role of women in society and to make it easier for them to assume positions of responsibility. I am pleased and proud to note that there are seven women ministers in the current Government of Morocco under the leadership of Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi.

We are also all concerned about protecting the environment. Although significant progress has been made since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the IOC was the first body to ensure that its Earth Covenant was signed by all national Olympic committees and international federations at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. The main issue, however, is that, when they engage in sport, human beings want to do so in an unpolluted environment, thus helping to protect the natural world that fills us with joy and gives us food and drink. To be sure, the Olympic Games and sport cannot make the world better definitively, but sport requires sharing, gives men and women the opportunity to get in good physical shape, and helps children to understand the meaning of victory, excellence and team spirit.

I ran for the pleasure of sport. That opened so many horizons for me and helped me to deal with numerous social pressures. I consider myself today to be an ambassador of sport and of my country, duty-bound to share the experience that I earned so dearly, as well as the true value of sport in comforting all those who suffer under prejudice and unequal opportunities.

Volunteers are the most important resource that sport enjoys in its development. It is therefore necessary to promote the work of volunteers who serve communities in a spirit of solidarity. However, we need to combat such scourges as drugs, doping and HIV/AIDS in order to protect the health and well-being of our young people. Violence and racism in the context of sport have also become an issue of serious concern, and we must therefore stress a policy of preventive education to ensure that they do not spread, particularly among young people.

In August 2005, the Kingdom of Morocco hosted the Second Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit and identified its priority objective as mobilizing young people through sport and encouraging actions undertaken by private and public partners to raise young Moroccans' awareness of the benefits of sport, education, health, development and peace. In application of the principle of sport for all and in keeping with General Assembly resolution 61/10, entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace", Morocco has undertaken a series of activities to ensure that sport is understood as the right of all individuals, without distinction of race or social class.

The sport policy adopted by the Kingdom of Morocco has allowed us to promote activities for young people in rural and exurban environments and to prioritize the participation of girls and women in sport. Our policy has had the positive impact of significantly raising the number of members of national sport federations. In 2006, it helped over 292,000 young people by instituting a national sport programme involving sports schools and awareness-raising activities for various sports, as well as inter-communal tournaments. Moreover, Morocco's resolve to ensure the participation of disabled people in sport has made sport a tool of social integration for that sector of the population by encouraging the disabled to participate in various international sporting events.

The national human development initiative launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI on 18 May 2005 attaches particular importance to sport in the implementation of development projects throughout the country. It recognizes that participation is critical to the success of sporting activities designed to benefit the youth of Morocco. Indeed, the projects that have been undertaken in the context of that initiative have created a true socio-cultural dynamic in the less prosperous rural and urban districts through the organization of events and the construction of sports facilities. In 2006, over 70,000 people, including 26,000 women, participated in sporting events, and

21 sports facilities were constructed, while 13 others are in the process of completion.

I was privileged and honoured to participate as an athlete in the Olympic Games and through my responsibilities in the international Olympic family to contribute, on behalf of my country, to the implementation of the Olympic ideal that is dear to all of us and should guide our steps as we seek to build a world of peace, development and well-being for all. My presence here in the General Assembly is, in fact, but the simple continuation of my country's commitment to implementing the aims and principles of the United Nations and to promoting and applying the Olympic ideal.

In that regard, I take this opportunity to express my country's support for draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". As a sponsor of the draft resolution, Morocco seeks to demonstrate its tireless support for the principles and ideals contained therein.

I also take this pleasant opportunity to congratulate the people and Government of China, which are preparing to host the summer Olympics in August 2008. My delegation is convinced that the games to be held in that great country, with its millennial civilization, will be an opportunity once again to reaffirm our devotion to Olympic values and will certainly make a significant contribution to renewing the Olympic ideal.

The Kingdom of Morocco is convinced that sport is a preparation for life that guarantees the development of the individual and the enhancement of the individual's ability to serve sustainable development, community and country. Better yet, sport, which propagates such humanist values as tolerance and understanding among peoples, is an indispensable element and enduring school of life that we must continue to cultivate to ensure peace and solidarity in the international arena.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Ms. Park (Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf of the Asian States, the delegation of the Republic of Korea is speaking in support of the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". We are convinced that the August 2008 Olympic Games to be held in Beijing under the themes "Green Olympics", "High-tech Olympics" and "People's Olympics" will be crowned with success.

As a country of Asia, which has twice hosted the Olympic Games, the Republic of Korea expects the Beijing Games — the third to be held on our continent — will contribute to world peace and conciliation, as well as to regional peace and reconciliation. We also hope that Members will respect the Olympic Truce and support the initiative of sport for human development.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Peru, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Next year, Beijing will host the twenty-ninth Olympic Games from 8 to 24 August and the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games from 6 to 17 September. Those events will focus the world's attention on thousands of athletes who will do their best in the practice of a number of activities within the 35 Olympic sporting disciplines.

The impressive mobilization of resources, efforts and dreams that are part of the Olympic Games also offers another opportunity to recall the Olympic ideal and to use sport as a means to promote peace and understanding among human beings. The embodiment of that ideal involves the athletes, their trainers, the judges, the sports authorities and the many others who will gather in Beijing next year. However, it is also an opportunity to promote the ideal of peace through the observance of the Olympic Truce. We hope that the Truce will be observed around the world, and that, at the very least, the clash of arms and the tragedy of war will be suspended during the celebration of the Olympic Games. The Olympic Truce also must be an occasion to open a space for dialogue, peace and reconciliation where conflicts and violence are entrenched.

The practice of sport is also an opportunity to promote the development of human beings. It is therefore necessary to recall the important role that sport should play in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals agreed in 2000, as well as the commitments assumed in that regard by our heads of State and Government at the 2005 Summit. The United Nations must continue supporting such initiatives in order to put the incentives and potential resulting from the practice of sport within reach of all human beings.

Taking such considerations into account, and on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I am pleased to express the support of our region for the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of China under the title "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", as well as our commitment to helping ensure that the Olympic ideal is the best legacy of the Olympic and Paralympics Games that Beijing will host in 2008.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Benin, who will speak on behalf of the African States.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): The African Group thanks you, Sir, for convening this plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the importance of promoting sport for peace and development. We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the item under consideration.

We welcome the presence here today of the President of the International Olympic Committee, the President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the Twenty-Ninth Olympiad, and Mrs. Moutawakel, whose name is well known among young Africans because of the extraordinary feats of prowess she has accomplished, thereby earning special renown for African women and African sports.

The report offers a thorough overview of the various aspects and issues involved. It identifies in a very explicit and informative way the progress achieved during the first year of the three-year road map for the implementation of the United Nations Action Plan to strengthen the contribution of sports to peace and development.

In describing activities carried out at various levels, the report helps us to appreciate the extent to which sport has been instrumental in fostering peace and development. We commend the fact that the report encompasses all actors and stakeholders, with due regard for the dynamic of their mobilization, and accounts for the policies and strategies applied.

Mr. Jallow (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The report attests to the flourishing in many countries of the invaluable potential of sport as a tool for strengthening international peace and security and understanding among the people of the United Nations. The activities carried out have given true meaning to the spirit of the Olympic Truce. We welcome the peacebuilding initiatives launched in countries emerging from conflict, and especially the assistance provided to them in restoring their full participation in the world Olympic Movement and international events. Similarly, the report shows that sport has been a powerful lever in the pursuit of the internationally agreed development goals, especially the Millennium Development Goals, and the high value assigned to social integration efforts targeting the various categories of people with special needs.

We welcome with genuine satisfaction the manifold partnerships and initiatives that have paved the way for a worldwide mobilization involving not only Member States, but also the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations and sports organizations. We particularly commend the United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace, and especially the Special Adviser, for their endeavours to ensure the necessary support for the most important events staged in the process of implementing the Action Plan. It is worth highlighting in this debate the fact that the Office displayed a high degree of commitment by organizing the Global Youth Leadership Summit in 2006, an outstanding initiative for which it deserves full recognition.

We commend the Special Advisor for his endeavours to help establish close cooperation between the African Union and the European Union, with the full involvement of African institutions, devoted to promoting the development of sporting activities in African countries.

As regards the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" and the issues it addresses, we should like to place on record the adherence of the African Group, which shares the concerns motivating it and the solicitations it contains.

In less than a year, the twenty-ninth Olympic Games will take place in China. We welcome the resolve of the Government and people of China to perpetuate that global sporting event, which will take place in the spirit that was born with the first games in ancient times. The modern Olympic Games represent a meeting of young people for peace in 2008 in full compliance with international standards, because sport promotes the building of a better world and encourages development, including the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. We congratulate China for having earnestly assumed the task of organizing the Olympic Games to be held in Beijing, in accordance with international norms under the motto "One World, One Dream", as well for its joint endeavours in the social field at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Africa will make its contribution to the observance of the Olympic Truce called for in the draft resolution. No other continent needs more than Africa to harness the positive energy generated by sport for such encounters, mutual understanding and reconciliation. It is in the interest of African Governments and peoples to take advantage of that opportunity to enhance awareness of the need to foster the culture of peace within and among the countries through the promotion of dialogue by maximizing the impetus anticipated from active participation in the forthcoming Beijing Olympiads.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): My delegation has taken note with great satisfaction of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects", which he has submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session to review the steps taken over the past year to implement the three-year Action Plan included in last year's report of the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General's report recalls yet again the source of the enthusiasm for sport for development and peace. Sport is an effective and efficient tool for meeting so many of humanity's challenges. As reported, many Member States, as well as United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, have benefited over the past year from sport in successfully addressing such pressing issues as racism, the plight of street children, gender inequality, traumatized youth and obesity all around the world. It is all the more encouraging as a clear sign that the International Year for Sport and Physical Education in 2005 and previous General Assembly resolutions are having a lasting effect. Sport is no longer seen merely as a desirable asset; it is now recognized as a cost-effective tool for advancing human development. The fact that this shift has been achieved within only a few years is remarkable in and of itself.

Switzerland is therefore pleased by the Secretary-General's decision to renew the mandate of his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace. The current Special Adviser and his support team have again this year delivered a convincing performance and Switzerland thanks them for their fruitful efforts. However, we agree with the recent statement of the Secretary-General that their work is not finished.

The Special Adviser must remain the global advocate to lead the efforts of the United Nations system to promote sport as a tool for development and peace. Moreover, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report, the Special Adviser is in a unique position to facilitate partnerships across all sectors of society. The United Nations needs a Special Adviser to pursue that useful and important task.

Finally, the Special Adviser represents the Secretary-General and the United Nations system at various global sporting events, such as the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. That allows him not only to promote sport for peace and development, but also directly to address people around the globe on behalf of the United Nations.

Since its inception, Switzerland has been one of the main supporters of the Office of the Special Adviser. In addition, together with the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, we chair the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, composed of 28 permanent representatives to the United Nations.

To date, the status of the Office of the Special Adviser has been provisional and somewhat uncertain. Given the Secretary-General's recent decision to renew the Special Adviser's mandate, Switzerland, on behalf of the Group of Friends, has been collaborating with the Office of the Special Adviser and the Secretariat, along with all other interested Members, to identify feasible options for a more stable arrangement. We therefore welcome the Secretariat's plans to establish a trust fund on sport for development and peace within the secretariat in Geneva, with a point of contact in New York.

The formal establishment of an Office of the Special Adviser would be a strong signal that the United Nations intends to continue promoting the use of sport as a tool for advancing development and peace. Moreover, we hope that the new arrangement will ease the way for more Member States to provide financial support for the activities of the Special Adviser. There is urgent need for such support and we call on them all to provide additional resources to enable the Special Adviser's team adequately to support the core functions of the Special Adviser. Switzerland is prepared to continue to do so. We also hope that the General Assembly will have the opportunity at this session to decide on a resolution on sport for peace and development. Such a resolution could welcome a more stable structure, confirm its strategic orientation and ask the Secretary-General to report back on this issue at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

My delegation takes this opportunity to express its full support for the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". We are convinced that such initiatives can have concrete results and ensure that the Games are conducted in peace.

Mr. Pataki (United States of America): Today, the Assembly has the honour of invoking the spirit of the Olympic Truce. For several Olympiads, the United Nations has advocated the Olympic Truce with a view to protecting, as far as possible, the interests of the athletes and sport in general, and to contributing to the quest for peaceful and diplomatic solutions to conflicts.

It is a distinct privilege to welcome as witnesses to our work this morning members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), led by IOC President Jacques Rogge and including senior American members Ms. Anita DeFrantz and Mr. James Easton. Further, it is with delight that the United States delegation notes the presence of the United States Olympic Committee, led by its Chief of International Relations, Mr. Robert Fasulo. The distinguished service of those leaders and countless other volunteers has indeed built a better and more peaceful world through sport and the Olympic ideal. Let me just add that it is an honour for me, as a former Governor of the state of New York, which is proud to have twice hosted the winter Olympics, to rise in honour of this delegation.

The practice of heralding an Olympic Truce during the games to enable the safe passage and participation of attendees through areas of conflict is among the oldest of accords, dating from 776 BC. History reveals that the Olympic Truce has transcended differences whenever people meet people on the fields of fair play.

As has been the case on eight occasions in this Hall since 1993, the United States is honoured to be among the sponsors of today's draft resolution proclaiming the Olympic Truce, entitled "Building a better and more peaceful world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

But it is not so much that the Assembly proclaims the Truce as that its action today essentially validates the natural, truce-like atmosphere that prevails throughout the world community whenever countries meet on Olympic fields. In that sense, the Olympic Truce was revived not by this Assembly in 1993; rather, it was revived upon the convening of the modern Olympic Games themselves in 1896. As in ancient times, the Olympic Truce's central purpose has been to enable the safe passage and participation of all concerned with the Games. Indeed, it has contributed to that end through the centuries during war and peace.

Historical interpretations differ slightly. Did the ancient games come before the Truce among warring States, or was the ancient Truce necessary for the passage and participation of those who were otherwise enemies to meet at ancient Olympia? What is certain is that the Olympic Truce, attributed to the Oracle at Delphi, is at the pinnacle of the principles and purposes of Olympism.

To understand better the heritage of the Truce, Olympic historians are now identifying more closely the wording of the ancient Truce. They know that it was inscribed on a discus solemnly displayed in the Temple of Hera adjacent to the ancient stadium at Olympia.

The world witnessed extraordinary human achievement in the shadow of that temple, not only centuries ago, but in recent months. Superhuman efforts contained by mere metres the rampaging fires that nearly engulfed the ancient sites of Olympia. Brave firefighters preserved the sites from which the heralds were sent forth to call for the safe passage of all the Games. The ferocious fire threatened the heart of the Olympic Movement; the fire was overcome. Having been tamed, now it will ignite the Olympic torch on its way from the ancient fields to modern Beijing.

Today's draft resolution exhorts the world to overcome similar threats — geopolitical threats — and to similarly tame them so as to ignite humankind to pursue the goals and ideals of international understanding, security and prosperity, as envisioned in the United Nations Charter.

Today, Member States adopt the Olympic Truce at the United Nations. Next August, competitors will swear the athletes' oath of fair play at the opening ceremonies. Let those solemn practices inspire all others to make their own truces with conflicts in their lives that keep them from pursuing their own goals and ideals. Bringing the Olympic Truce closer to home takes us from being spectators of excellence to being actual participants. Let today's draft resolution be implemented at all levels: intergovernmental, national, community, household and personal.

Intergovernmentally, the Olympic Truce will continue to enliven various forms of United Nations collaborations in the field to promote peace through sport. Nationally, the Olympic Truce might be further interpreted to suggest a time-out from societal unrest as each country supports its Olympic competitors. Communities and households can draw heavily on the example of Olympic accomplishment, and so inspired might commit to excellence in everyday pursuits. Individual witnesses to the Games can see fair play at work, and so moved might commit to fighting temptations that otherwise would keep them from realizing their goals and ideals.

So today, our consideration here reminds the world to prepare for the forthcoming Games in spirit as well as in body. Sport is not an end in itself, but rather a means to educate the youth of the world for the harmonious development of mankind.

To promote the Olympic Truce into concrete action, the IOC established the International Olympic Truce Foundation, which is based in Athens. Its programmes lead to global support and observance of the Olympic Truce and to the steady shaping of a culture of peace. To promote dialogue, the Foundation conducts the prestigious International Forum on Sport for Peace and the Olympic Truce that meets biennially in Olympia.

Promoting such initiatives in favour of the Olympic Truce requires partnerships among the members of the Olympic family, international and national organizations and non-governmental organizations that contribute to the cause of peace. Above all, the Truce and its initiatives are those of the people of the world for the people of the world.

The United States delegation recognizes and supports opportunities such as today's draft resolution for building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that, immediately following the adjournment of this meeting, there will be an informal segment to hear a statement by the President of the International Olympic Committee.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for the report that forms the basis of today's debate, as contained in document A/62/325 and entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects".

We also welcome the efforts of Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, and his contribution to the dissemination of messages regarding the value of sports for development.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States regarding draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". I should like to take this opportunity to make some specific comments on the broader subject of sport for peace and development. The Government of the Republic of Guatemala attaches great importance to that subject, because physical activity for health as well as sport and recreation in all their forms are considered a right of all Guatemalans.

Since the signing of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace in 1996, the Ministry of Culture and Sports has made every effort to contribute to its implementation. That institution has aimed all of its programmes and activities at building a culture of peace based on the attitudes and values developed by Guatemalan society. Mindful of Guatemalan multiculturalism, the Ministry seeks to strengthen peaceful coexistence through socio-cultural exchanges, respect for differences, appreciation of creativity, social organization and links between human beings and between them and nature — all in a context of long-term activities to promote peace and sustainable human development.

Recently, the Ministry of Culture and Sports, together with the Presidency of the Republic of Guatemala, has implemented a programme to bring recreation to detention centres. The programme consists of promoting sport as a means of social integration, rehabilitation and equal opportunity. In addition, a social reintegration programme is aimed at individuals and groups considered socially at risk: prisoners, members of street groups, child workers and refugees, including handicapped members of such groups.

Among the activities carried out with these groups, we should mention schools for chess, training and recreation, aimed at juvenile delinquents; sport events for street children, workers and shantytown residents; national barrier-free games and a chess school for the blind. There are also other initiatives that involve recreational sports training schools, such as the "Peace Bowl" rural soccer championship and sports coaching for disabled persons, and programmes to exchange war toys for educational toys, supported by volunteers from civil society.

Furthermore, specific programmes have been developed for children, young people and older adults. The children's programme provides children with sport and recreation opportunities through various activities enabling them to use free time in a healthful way. It encourages children to participate in sports such as athletics, basketball and soccer, and it seeks to promote moral and social values through physical activities. The main objective of the youth programme is to promote productive activity by young people through sports and to identify, support and strengthen youth leaders who can promote sports in their communities. The programme for older adults, aimed at those aged 50 and above, seeks to improve their quality of life through physical, recreational and cultural activities. It is worth noting that 75 per cent of those participating in this programme are women.

My delegation welcomed the entry into force of the International Convention against Doping in Sport on 1 February 2007 and wishes to report that it is already under consideration by the Congress of the Republic for approval. Likewise, Guatemala was also pleased to have successfully hosted the 119th session of the International Olympic Committee in July. We are grateful for the support of all those who participated, and we hope to see them in our country once again.

Furthermore, I wish to stress the need for continued efforts to fully incorporate sport and physical education into development programmes. Appropriate assistance should also be given to developing countries in order to mobilize the resources necessary to improve sports infrastructures and facilities, which benefit the health and wholesome development of children and young people.

I also wish to commend the work carried out in collaboration with United Nations peacekeeping missions and with the support of the International Olympic Committee. We are confident that such initiatives and programmes will also be implemented with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti to benefit the Haitian people.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms the importance of implementing strategies that incorporate sport more effectively into various health, education, development and peace programmes at the local, national, regional and global levels. In that connection, we welcome the initiative of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme, in collaboration with the United Nations New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace. The initiative is aimed at implementing a programme in Central America to use sport as an instrument for the inclusion of young people and the promotion of peace.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of Chile to express our support for draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", just introduced by Mr. Liu Qi, President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games. We are convinced that sport is an effective vehicle for promoting not only peace and development, but also an environment of tolerance, dialogue and respect — which are so necessary in today's world — in the spirit of the Olympic Truce.

I should like to recall that the link between sport and peace is not just theoretical. In the case of Haiti and the United Nations Mission in that country, it has hosted soccer teams from Brazil and Chile, impressing on tens of thousands of Haitians the idea of solidarity and peace through sport. We should have more such occasions.

On behalf of Chile, I should also like to say that we received with great interest the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/325 and Corr.1), which describes the first year of implementation of the Action Plan, which we adopted some time ago. We are optimistic about the Plan, because we consider it an excellent road map that will enable us not only to guide the efforts of Governments, civil society and multilateral organizations, but also to have a very positive impact through the expansion and strengthening of plans and programmes being implemented in all of our countries.

One problem that we find particularly worrisome derives from the relationship between sport and physical health. According to international studies, people who do not engage in physical exercise form a high-risk group with significantly higher mortality rates than people who exercise sufficiently.

For that reason, this draft resolution presented by China, as well as others that will be presented soon, should contribute to the implementation of public policies to promote sport and physical education, derived from the creation of a worldwide culture of sport and physical education. This programme should bring together young people, adults and seniors; handicapped athletes; men and women; inhabitants of developed and developing countries — everyone should come together to improve their quality of life and contribute to a less violent, healthier, more tolerant world — all within the Olympic ideal.

Of course, promoting sporting activities and physical education is the sovereign responsibility of each country. But at the multilateral level there is a need for a permanent, sufficiently representative structure to allow us to cooperate with national efforts. In principle, we are pleased that the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Sport, Development and Peace was established in Geneva, with a liaison office in New York, under the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. However, we need such a structure to be established in a permanent way with sufficient financial resources to suitably carry out its mandate. That financing should be stable and predictable and should preferably come from the regular budget or from the donors community.

In a different but related context, we would like to congratulate the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Adolph Ogi, whose Office, together with other bodies, has taken a number of actions to promote sport and physical education; the New York Office has joined in these efforts in an outstanding way.

Finally, we believe it necessary to establish strategic alliances among the United Nations, the private sector and civil society in order to mobilize resources and create national capacities. Here, foundations, non-governmental organizations and sports federations have a central role to play. At the same time, the United Nations should strengthen its ties with international organizations such as the Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA) and the International Olympic Committee.

As we promote sport, peace and development, we are facilitating the implementation of the internationally agreed development objectives, including those of the Millennium Development Goals, as my colleague from Benin has stated on behalf of the African Group. As a member of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, Chile is satisfied with the work the Group has done thus far, and will continue to work actively with other delegations as we try to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves.

Mr. Naik (India): We thank the Secretary-General for his report on "Sport for peace and development: progress and prospects" (A/62/325 and Corr.1). We note the well-organized structure and good presentation of information in the report, which provides an overview of activities undertaken on various fronts by Member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders. It also makes recommendations for further action based on lessons learned.

India supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to highlight the useful role that sport can play in consolidating peace and furthering development. Sport is an easy and relatively inexpensive way of engaging the energies of youth in a positive and constructive manner. It teaches the spirit of sportsmanship that generates tolerance of spirit and action and respect for the opponent. It also inculcates discipline through the observance of the rules of the game. It develops camaraderie and good fellowship that enhances the ability of communities to coexist peacefully.

The contribution of sport to furthering development is also recognized. A healthy mind lives in a healthy body. Sport provides physical activity, enhances oxygen intake and improves stamina. It brings people together for a common purpose. Its enjoyable format provides a good vehicle for propagating difficult social messages. Sport improves productivity and fosters social harmony and discipline. Indeed, sport can play a subtle, positive and constructive role in development and peace.

India believes that activities related to sport and physical education are a necessary component of human resource development. India has a long tradition of sport and physical education. Ancient Indian scriptures and literature describe the important place in princely education of such sports as archery, weight-lifting and wrestling. A mastery over such sports was considered as important as the knowledge of scriptures. Education in modern India is trying to continue and build upon this heritage and respect for sport and physical education.

In view of the key role of sport and games in national life, the Government of India has taken a number of initiatives to improve the standard of sport in the country. There is wide recognition of the need for broad-basing sport and for the provision of modern sport infrastructure. The Government has made efforts towards upgrading the skills of the coaching fraternity, the creation of sport infrastructure and the construction of an adequate sport-science backup. Efforts are also being made to encourage national sport federations to make their operations more effective and focused.

The involvement of society at large, particularly business and industry, is adding to the efforts of the Government. To encourage sport and sportspersons, a number of prestigious awards are bestowed to recognize their achievements. Several schemes have been put in place to propagate sport and to provide incentives for sporting activities. These include schemes such as the Sports Fund for Pension for Meritorious Sportspersons, as well as the Promotion of Sports and Games in Schools programme.

While the welfare of young sportspersons is covered by the Sport Scholarship Scheme, a National Welfare Fund has been established to assist retired sportspersons. A National Sports Development Fund has been set up to mobilize resources. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in the Government of India represents sport at the national level. The Government has also established the Sport Authority of India to pursue the twin objectives of broad-basing sport and nurturing talent in children through the provision of necessary infrastructure, equipment, coaching and other facilities. These include a Sports Medicine Centre and Dope Control Centre.

We agree with the Secretary-General on the need to enhance the use of sport to help reverse disease and obesity, especially among young people. The report mentions the role of sport in reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS. While sport may have only a limited role in this regard, the promotion of sport can play a more critical role in reversing the growing trend of juvenile diabetes in urban areas. Regular practice of a sport can also help lower anxiety and high blood pressure caused by the pressures of modern living among the younger generation of today.

We note from the report of the Secretary-General that despite uneven progress, there is evidence indicating a better integration of sport across all geographical regions. However, the report points out that the lack of adequate resources, facilities and trained personnel continues to be a key constraint in many countries. Developing countries have to deal with enormous challenges with limited resources. These challenges are even more daunting for the least developed countries.

The complexion of sport has undergone a transformation in the modern world. The pursuit of sport today requires the availability of modern and highly sophisticated equipment, infrastructure and training. The ready availability of and easy access to such facilities in the developed world tilts the international sporting arena towards the developed world. There is, thus, a solemn need for international cooperation and assistance for encouraging the development of sport infrastructure in developing countries.

In this context, we agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation to make sport and physical education more accessible to larger segments of the world's population, especially to those who lack the opportunity and facilities. We also agree with the need to promote investment in the expansion of sports infrastructure and facilities, including through enhanced resources, sports sciences and sports medicine programmes, particularly in the developing world. We support the Secretary-General's call for greater efforts for promotion of sports and physical education. That could include advocacy through participation in sports and non-sporting events. We are convinced, however, that sporting activities themselves are the best advocacy tool for the promotion of sports. We hope therefore that the United Nations system will focus its efforts on promoting sports through sports themselves, rather than through conferences and meetings.

Sport is an inalienable part of the educational process and a factor for promoting peace, friendship, cooperation and understanding among peoples. We agree with the Secretary-General that sport and physical education are not luxuries in society, and much less so in the developing world. We must therefore invigorate our efforts for the promotion of sports for development and peace.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): Cyprus has had strong links with the Olympic concept in modern as well as ancient times — as matter of fact, since the inception of the Olympic Games in 776 B.C. — and I wish to make a few remarks.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Chinese delegation for tabling resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" and wish the Government of the People's Republic of China, the host of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, every success in that endeavour. I wish also to express appreciation for the presence here today of the President of the International Olympic Committee, Mr. Jacques Rogge, as well as other distinguished representatives of the Olympic movement, within the framework of promoting the Games and the preservation of the Olympic ideals, including fair play.

Sport, especially in the context of the Olympic Games, whether as an historical or contemporary concept, is a momentous and perpetually relevant element in all facets of human life and no less in our work here at the United Nations.

Sport is an integral part of human development and well-being, both individual and collective. Its contribution to development, capacity-building, unity and bringing people closer together has been evidenced on many occasions. Often unnoticed, however, is the power of creating a culture of sport as an effective tool for ethos-building among the youth of all our countries.

Also, the focus of our discussion today is how the concept of sport, and the virtues it entails, relates to the core human instincts of peace and security. Let us take the tradition of the Olympic Truce as an example. The cessation of all hostilities before, during and after the Olympic Games in antiquity is a practice recalled and revered as much today as it was then. So why are we then unable today to cease hostilities on any grounds, including through the pursuit of sport, whose purpose is to remind us that humankind was created for pursuits more noble than conflict?

If the ancients, with their limited means of disseminating knowledge and information, were able to observe such a truce, despite the immense difficulties, why can we not, with all the means we have to ensure collective ethos and civilization and to protect human life as our most valued possession, achieve at least as much by establishing a corresponding contemporary practice? The task of ensuring safe passage for athletes to reach the Games through the Olympic Truce might be less pertinent now than in the past. But the biggest contribution of that tradition has never been one of practical arrangements.

The creation of a peaceful environment, with the hope that this would have implications more lasting than the duration of the Games themselves, was always consubstantial to the Olympic ideal. More importantly, inherent in the tradition of the Olympic Truce, there have always been three key messages: first, the futility of war, the denunciation of violence and subjugation, and the superiority of pursuits that bring people together; secondly, the quest for freedom, shared values, and the intrinsically noble character of fairness and synergy; and, thirdly, the recognition of their contribution to the prosperity of all and to the further development of culture and civilization.

However, we should recognize that the content of the draft resolution before us, to which we lend our support as we traditionally have done, has never been fully implemented in all its elements, despite its biannual adoption and unanimous support. We hope that its letter and spirit will gradually be embedded in international human custom and that its observance will be one of those instances when history will repeat itself.

Mr. Noghès (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): A few months from now, the People's Republic of China will be hosting the twenty-ninth Olympic Games followed by the Paralympic Games. The Olympics are traditionally the most widely followed sporting event throughout the world and that is because they inspire all peoples in all their diversity to come together in their admiration for athletes who are doing their best in peaceful competition.

As was the case for the athletes who met at each Olympic Games since the forty-eighth session, the General Assembly has revived the ancient Greek tradition of the Olympic Truce to recall the extent to which the Olympic ideal can and must be an example for promoting peace and understanding among peoples. Monaco continues to co-sponsor with pride and conviction the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/62/L.2).

Sport brings together positive energies, when practiced with respect for effort and work, without cheating nor the use of stimulants or doping substances. In hosting his counterpart Ministers of Sports on the occasion of the twelfth Games of the Small States of Europe, our Minister of Sports, Mr. Paul Masseron, Government Advisor for the Ministry of the Interior, stated that

> "doping cannot be accepted, neither in high-level sports where it jeopardizes competition nor in individual competition where it destroys the whole educational thrust of sport, because doping is no longer today a question of level, age or discipline".

Since 2003, the Principality of Monaco has had an antidoping committee that is involved in implementing antidoping policies in keeping with the objectives of the International Convention against Doping in Sport. Over 150 tests will be conducted in the Principality this year. His Serene Highness, Prince Albert II, former Olympic athlete and member of the International Olympic Committee, has been paying particular attention to ethics in sports. We therefore welcome the entry into force of the International Convention against Doping in Sport in February 2007.

With their breadth, the Olympic Games are a showcase for 36 different sports. The sense of brotherhood in sport is within everyone's grasp. From refugee camps to street children, from schools to business firms, sports promote the development of the human being.

A recognition of the humanist aspect of sport underlay the signing of an agreement between our Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 27 June 2007, setting up an innovative programme on humanistic sport for the development of urban youth. Drawing on the educational values of humanist sport, the project is designed to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It aims to reintegrate young people in difficulty in disadvantaged areas. Cape Town, South Africa, was chosen for this partnership with UNDP. The establishment of a football training centre for young people is also being studied, along with literacy and professional training courses.

Members know Prince Albert II's commitment to the protection of the environment. The host of the next Games is the city of Beijing, and we congratulate Beijing on its efforts at "greening" the Games, as reflected in the report of the United Nations Development Programme. Indeed, this is a phenomenal task in terms of transport management, water purification, waste recycling and energy efficiency. New urban centres, with a forested park of 580 hectares, the use of solar energy — all of these are indispensable investments.

Last June, the Principality of Monaco hosted the twelfth Games of the Small States of Europe. Prince Albert II wanted to ensure that this event was ecologically effective. Following the event, a declaration was adopted by the heads of State or Government of the Principality of Andorra, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Republic of San Marino and the Principality of Monaco. The declaration recognized the important potential of sport as a vehicle for values and a factor in the creation of a true ethic of sustainable development. Secondly, it recognized that the sport must be in harmony with the environment. Thirdly, it stated that the Games of the Small States of Europe must respect the environment, and called in particular for carbon-neutral Games in order to minimize their environmental impact. The organizing country would commit itself to compensate for greenhouse gas emissions and any other negative impact relating to the Games or their preparation, through such initiatives to protect the environment as it deems most appropriate.

Finally, the signatories stated the intention to develop in their respective countries environmental awareness based on a spirit of solidarity and leading to environmentally friendly behaviour. At the initiative of the Prince Albert II Foundation, it was decided to measure the greenhouse gas impact of the Games and to reduce it by all means possible. Monaco will offset this, including by planting trees.

Mr. Rogachev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Sport, peace and development are closely interconnected. The absence of war is a precondition for sporting competition. Sporting competition is not a struggle between enemies, but rather a competition among partners in their common aspiration for development. In this period of globalization, when the world is facing new challenges and threats and when it is necessary to have a dialogue between civilizations, we are convinced that international cooperation in the area of sport can play an important role in overcoming national and religious enmity and in bringing together the world community.

The role of sport as an ambassador of peace is particularly significant when linked to the noble traditions of the Olympic Truce. It is necessary to inculcate in future generations a spirit of the culture of peace, non-violence and tolerance, showing that the Olympic ideal is not out of date and is still significant.

In this connection, Russia has sponsored and fully supports draft resolution A/62/L.2 on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal, and we call on all to observe this Olympic Truce.

The flame of the Olympic torch should light the way, leading humankind into the third millennium: a beacon indicating a world without enmity and violence. Next year, this flame of peace will illuminate the ancient city of Beijing, the host of the 2008 summer Olympic Games. We sincerely wish our Chinese colleagues every success in organizing this global event.

Seven years from now, the Olympic baton will be passed to the Russian city of Sochi, which will host the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. We are convinced that the Olympics to be held in our country will provide a significant impetus to the Olympic Movement and strengthen the values of a healthy lifestyle. At present, Sochi is building the most modern sporting facilities and is working at full steam to improve its infrastructure so as to ensure the success of this major event.

Russia highly values the activities of the United Nations in enhancing international cooperation in sport and confirming the ideals of the sporting movement throughout the world. We welcome the joint initiative of the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to promote the inclusion of sport and physical education in programmes in the fields of education, health, environmental protection, combating hunger and improving the status of women.

We believe that support for sport, including at the political level, may help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on sport (A/62/325 and Corr.1). A very important role here falls to Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace. We are ready to continue our fruitful cooperation with the Special Adviser, and we support the ongoing activities of the New York-based United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace, headed by Mr. Djibril Diallo.

Sport is a universal language, thanks to which competitors come from many countries, cultures and faiths. We can thus talk about the significant potential of sport for diplomacy as a way of ensuring a channel to promote a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations. Pierre de Coubertin said that sport was an ambassador of peace and a reliable bridge of friendship and mutual understanding between peoples. We must make full use of its potential.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/325 and Corr.1). It gives us an overall assessment of the progress achieved over the past year on the national, regional and international levels in implementing strategies and programmes on sport for development and peace.

As noted in the report, sport has great potential in making a substantive contribution to enhancing peace and achieving development goals, as formulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The increasing role of sport in achieving international agreement in the field of development, including the

MDG targets, was reaffirmed by heads of State or Government at the 2005 World Summit.

In this context, we certainly value the measures undertaken by the Secretary-General in implementing the Action Plan intended to expand and strengthen United Nations partnerships with Governments, sport-related organizations and the private sector. The participation today by the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Mr. Rogge, in the consideration of this particular item, underscores the fact that this Organization of ours and all of its structures are actively working with this most prestigious sporting organization on a global level.

The delegation of Kazakhstan welcomes the entry into force on 1 February 2007 of the International Convention against Doping in Sport. We believe that the Convention will make a very significant contribution to preventing the use of doping in sport, and will do a lot to eradicate it. In this connection, we would like to note that an anti-doping laboratory for sports has begun operation, and in 2007 in Kazakhstan it was given full laboratory status from the World Anti-Doping Agency.

Kazakhstan welcomes the activities of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace and notes the importance of sport in achieving the goals of development and peace.

We would also like to note with satisfaction a global summit of young leaders held last year in New York under the auspices of the United Nations, which made possible a discussion on the important questions of propagating sport and mobilizing future youth leaders.

As we know, sport and physical education are an important way of teaching tolerance and a culture of peace, and also of bringing people closer together. In this connection, the delegation of Kazakhstan welcomes the activities of the Office of the Special Adviser and the Information Centres of the United Nations aimed at propagating the idea of sport as an instrument for development and peace, and also the measures undertaken to enhance the role of sport in building peace.

On behalf of our delegation, I would like to thank the delegation of China for its draft resolution on peace and building a better life on the planet through sport, and the implementation of Olympic sporting ideals. In this connection, Kazakhstan is one of the Members of the United Nations that co-sponsored this resolution "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/62/L.2). Of course, Kazakhstan will be most pleased to be participating in the twenty-ninth Olympic Games in a neighbouring country, and we have already been taking all of the necessary steps to ensure that we have as many spots as possible for our participants in these Olympic Games. We certainly hope that we will win a good number of medals as well.

Kazakhstan has been taking comprehensive measures to make use of sport to the benefit of peace. In December 2006 a Presidential decree confirmed our State's programme to develop physical education and sport in Kazakhstan for the years 2007 thru 2011. The programme calls for a set of measures aimed at ensuring participation in physical education and sport is as broad as possible, in particular among young people. This is important for improving their health, ensuring that we have many skilled athletes and for bringing our sportsmen up to the international level.

We are working to bring disabled persons into sports as well. A club of disabled sportsmen is operative in every region. In the south of Kazakhstan, we held our second Paralympic Games, with over 500 sports participants from all regions of the country. Considerable work has been done to develop boarding schools for children gifted in sports, regional Olympic-level training centres and Republican Schools for sports excellence. We would like to note that just this year, the Republic organized and held over 10,000 events on healthy-lifestyles, involving the participation of over 1.5 million people.

In 2011, Kazakhstan will be the host of the seventh Asian Winter Games, and active work is being done in our country today for holding this very important event. The appropriate Ministry has already engaged in negotiations with leading international architects. We have called for bids for building facilities near Almaty, and we are designating areas for these sports facilities. The overall expenditure will reach $1 billion.

Thus, my delegation believes that we must maintain the dynamism set by the United Nations and continue that educational path in implementing broader measures as well. This is something that we can do to enhance the cooperation and coordination between

Member States in order to come up with a general vision for the development of sport to benefit peace throughout the world.

Mr. Mourikis (Greece): It is a great honour for me to take the floor on agenda item 45 (b) in order to express my country's wholehearted support for draft resolution A/62/L.2.

Four years ago, Greece presented a similar resolution as it was preparing for the 2004 Athens Olympics. This year, it is China's turn to keep the tradition and table a resolution urging Member States to observe, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, the Olympic Truce during the twenty-ninth Olympic Games and Paralympic Games to be held in Beijing. The wide support extended to this year's resolution stresses the international community's recognition for the principles it embodies and our common goal: to celebrate the Games in peace, harmony and friendship. We wish China every success in organizing the Olympic Games.

In bringing the idea of the Olympic Truce to the forefront, we encourage the notion that it is possible to create lasting peace from a pause in hostilities. That is, in fact, how the Olympic Games were conceived in the first place. In antiquity, the implementation of the Olympic Truce entailed a cessation of all hostilities in order to allow the athletes and spectators to travel to and from Olympia to attend this sacred celebration of human achievement.

In today's world the message could not be more relevant. We strive for dialogue among civilizations and cooperation among the rich and the poor, yet everyday we witness our shortcomings. The Olympic Truce could be a constructive new approach to help resolve conflicts. The Olympic ideal speaks the universal language of peace, in which all peoples can communicate and share in its values.

The United Nations and the Olympic movement are natural allies. They share the same goals and observe the same principles. They are useful tools in the hands of the international community. It is up to us, the Member States, to seize the opportunity presented by this resolution and to observe the Truce for the benefit of our peoples. We express our appreciation and support to the International Olympic Committee for its tireless efforts to promote the Olympic Ideal and build bridges of understanding and cooperation.

Let me stress once again that by adopting, today, the resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" we take a positive stance towards life and reality, without any illusions. We simply state the obvious: that if we can have peace in the world for just 16 days, then maybe we can have it for much longer.

Before concluding, may I thank former Governor Pataki for his reference to the recent fires at the ancient sites of Olympia. Indeed, the world witnessed extraordinary human achievement, and I can assure the Assembly that Olympic torch will ignite again in Olympia before embarking on its long trip to Beijing.

Mr. Khalfallah (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I should like to start by congratulating the Secretary-General on his report entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/235 and Corr.1), the title of which, by itself, carries hope and great significance for the future of sport as an activity that the United Nations is comprehensively supporting.

Tunisia would also like to express its gratitude to Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, for all his efforts and for his activities to ensure the success of programmes to promote sport throughout the world and for the benefit of all.

Tunisia fully endorses the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Benin on behalf of the Group of African States and reaffirms its determination to continue its work to make sport an activity that brings peoples together and a factor for world peace and stability — two essential goals of our Organization.

Solidarity among peoples at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not a mere option; it is a necessity that, we are convinced, sport is capable of bringing to fruition. We support Mr. Ogi's activities to promote, in the words of the Secretary-General's report, "a common road map and coherent framework for action to build global partnerships around sport and physical education" (*A/62/325, para. 72*).

Indeed, our President, Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, decided to dedicate an entire year to physical education, in accordance with the Assembly's launch of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005 (see resolution 59/10), during which the world celebrated sport through a broad range of diverse and uniformly important activities, thereby highlighting the importance unanimously attach to sport and to the universal nature of this activity. Our duty is now to press on in this respect and to confirm that this was the correct choice, to which increasing resources are being allocated by everyone.

It is beyond dispute that sport today is of growing interest to the international community. This is seen in the vast number of sporting events, discussion forums and activities to popularize sports that have given rise to an international awareness that favours the role of sport as a fundamental support for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Sport is also a symbol of cooperation and of healthy, constructive friendship.

By sponsoring draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", Tunisia expresses once again its full commitment to the Olympic ideal. We remain convinced that the forthcoming Olympic Games in Beijing will be a complete success and a sporting and moral victory for all participants.

Tunisia is very pleased to note the Secretariat proposal regarding a fund for sport for development and peace and hopes that, once it is finalized, all the arrangements will allow for the effective implementation of the objectives we have set. Moreover, we are convinced that the formal establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser will help to promote the activities undertaken in the sphere of sport for development and peace and will prove to be a most valuable asset for the United Nations, which will thus have a tool to bring people together in a world that thirsts for dialogue, mutual understanding and tolerance.

The presence here of the President of the International Olympic Committee, the President of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad and the Special Adviser for Sport for Development and Peace shows the scope and importance that sport has acquired and the need to ensure that this activity is supported by all.

Mr. Carmon (Israel): Allow me to congratulate Mr. Kerim on his leadership of the Assembly and to thank him for convening this important joint debate.

Israel is proud to lend its support to draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". Similarly, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Sport for development and peace: progress and prospects" (A/62/325 and Corr.1), which summarizes the steps taken during the first year of the three-year road map to implement sport for development and peace programmes.

Sport offers a common language that speaks of international friendship and harmony and that can bridge the global seams of friction. The spirit of healthy competition provides a channel through which people of different religious, cultural, racial and political backgrounds can interact and enhance their respect for one another.

Within the context of the United Nations, as the Secretary-General's report shows, sport contributes to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and peace, by raising awareness and promoting values of cooperation and mutual understanding. No doubt, using sport as a universal focal point for interaction will bear fruit in the promotion of education, health, development and peace.

In our region, we have tried to harness the spirit of sport to forge relationships and build bridges across the dark waters of conflict. We hope that these types of competitions will continue to develop and expand in the future. Israel has a visibly active network of organizations that sponsor sport for peace and development days and that bring children — Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians — together under the umbrella of sport. A number of sport for peace programmes and festivals occur regularly; notable among them are those sponsored by the Peres Center for Peace, founded by our current President, Shimon Peres. These sport and competition days emphasize teamwork and cooperation, alongside fostering commonalities and sharing.

Similarly, the legendary story of Sons of Sakhnin United, a multi-ethnic Israeli soccer team comprising Jews, Arabs and others, and its quest to win the Premier League in Israel, continues to inspire hope and confidence in the capacity for sport and competition to inculcate respect and mutual understanding. This year, the prominence and power of this Cinderella story was brought to wide attention with the release of a documentary film on the subject and its appearance in internationally recognized film festivals.

Sons of Sakhnin United embodies the message of sport as a medium for peace and understanding in another modality as well. The team plays in a stadium widely known around the country as the Doha Stadium, which was built with public funds largely from the State of Israel and the Qatar National Olympic Committee. This joint venture between Israel and Qatar is a sign of the quest for peaceful and neighbourly relations within our region and the willingness to cross boundaries to achieve peace and harmony through sport. The Sons of Sakhnin United team, as we speak, holds the third position in Israel's top soccer league.

Unfortunately, not all sporting events are carried out with the same positivity. Although it is a painful part of our history, it is also worth remembering what happened at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, when gunmen from the terrorist group Black September, disguised as athletes, broke into the Olympic Village and killed 11 Israeli athletes, coaches and referees. The reverberations of that abhorrent and monstrous act of terrorism are felt in Israel — and around the world, for that matter — to this very day.

In that regard, we hope that the upcoming summer Olympic Games, to be held in Beijing next year, will adhere to the values of sport as an ideal way to stimulate body, mind and spirit, and in turn overcome barriers of language, politics and religion. The abuse of sport and international competition for political purposes is an affront to the very ethos and virtues of the Olympic tradition.

On the other hand, we know that sport can be utilized for great good. Just two weeks ago, the Israeli delegation to the 2007 Special Olympics, held in Shanghai, returned home from the games with tremendous pride and in high spirits. The Special Olympics prove to the world that determination, will and faith in one's abilities can overcome any limitation, regardless of the challenge. The resilience and commitment of those athletes should inspire us to utilize sport as an expression of the boundlessness of the human potential.

While sport has the power to bring people together, it alone cannot foster enduring peace. Supporting factors — such as an interest in peace among different groups, media involvement, strong participation by civil society and dedication by sport organizations — are needed if sport is to be an effective vehicle of peace. Israel strongly believes that to be true. We call on the nations of the world to use the opportunities provided by sport to foster peace and development, and to continue promoting those supporting factors to ensure the widest possible appeal. Israel pledges itself to fully support such endeavours.

Mr. Seakamela (South Africa): We thank Mr. Srgjan Kerim, President of the General Assembly, for organizing today's debate on the Secretary-General's report on sport for peace and development (A/62/325 and Corr.1). We also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for that comprehensive report.

Since its establishment, the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace has made significant strides towards the attainment of the objective of utilizing sport as a tool for development and peace. South Africa commends the work of the Office in New York and Geneva. Both offices have contributed to the advancement of advocacy work within the United Nations system and beyond aimed at promoting understanding and support for sport as a tool for development and peace.

South Africa is committed to the objectives related to the use of sport as a tool for development and peace. As a member of the New York-based Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, we have worked with others to encourage Member States to actively integrate sport into their international cooperation and development policies through the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions.

My delegation believes that sport provides a forum in which to learn skills and discipline, confidence and leadership, and that it teaches core principles, such as tolerance, cooperation and respect. Our leaders have persistently highlighted the potential that sport has in building social cohesion and national reconstruction and unity. In this connection, we remember how our nation was bound together in joy when we won the Rugby World Cup in 1995 and the African Soccer Cup of Nations in 1996, and more recently when we won the Rugby World Cup for the second time, earlier this year.

South Africa has also partnered and adopted measures, in compliance with General Assembly resolutions on sport for development and peace. In this context, since 2004 we have conducted the Siyadlala Community Mass Participation Programme and the

School Sport Mass Participation Programme. In addition, our country has partnered with other countries such as Angola, Australia, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and others in the area of sport for development and peace. We have also ratified the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport.

South Africa is honoured to have been awarded the rights to host the Féderation internationale de football association (FIFA) World Cup in 2010. This is the first time that this global game is being hosted on the African continent. The tournament is an important milestone for the entire continent, and we believe it provides our country, the region and the continent with a golden opportunity to boost our sport and tourism industries. The 2010 World Cup tournament can help advance our economic development to a higher notch and fast-track the attainment of elements of the Millennium Development Goals.

The African Union (AU) has declared 2007 the International Year of African Football, underscoring the United Nations view that sport can be an instrument to promote unity, solidarity and peace. In this context, the AU collaborated with the South African Government and the New York Office of the Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace on the activities for the International Year of African Football, as well as for the fiftieth anniversary of the Confederation of African Football and the lead-up to the 2010 World Cup.

My delegation expresses its appreciation for the contribution made by the New York Office of the Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace in shaping the concept, activities and innovative approaches of the International Year of African Football, which was launched at the eighth Summit of African Union Heads of State, held in Addis Ababa in January 2007. The Office's active participation in the technical workshop for the 2010 FIFA World Cup African Legacy Programme, which was held in Pretoria in March of this year, and in the first ministerial meeting of Ministers of Sport and Youth, which was held in Addis Ababa, was instrumental in enhancing the momentum of using sport as a tool for development and peace.

South Africa supports the efforts of the Office of Sport for Development and Peace focusing on the role of sport in peacebuilding activities. In this context, we underline the importance of strengthening the sporting programmes that were launched in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Liberia, in partnership with United Nations peacekeeping missions in those countries, and supported by other partners. We welcome the commencement of similar projects in other countries, such as Lebanon and Côte d'Ivoire.

In recognition of the progress made thus far in the area of sport for development and peace, it is important that we build on past success and establish more sustainable progress. In this context, we encourage the broader international community and, in particular, the United Nations system to provide support in promoting sport as a tool for achieving peace and development.

In conclusion, South Africa supports the draft resolution (A/62/L.2) introduced by the delegation of China.

The Acting President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): The role of sport within and among societies can be traced to some of the earliest civilizations. However, never before has the practice of sport become as firmly established as it is today. Sport has become a mass phenomenon capable of engaging huge crowds on a grand scale, breaking down geographic, racial, social, economic, political and cultural barriers.

Next year, the global community will once again come together to celebrate the ancient tradition of the Olympic Games in its twenty-ninth modern edition, to be held in Beijing. As the world prepares for that important event, we are reminded of the role that sport can play in the life of every individual and society.

Citius, altius, fortius: those three Latin words, used a century ago by Father Henri Martin Dideon to describe his students' achievements in sport, were adopted as the Olympic motto because the aspiration to be "swifter, higher, stronger" aptly describes the goals of great athletes all over the world.

Sport practiced in a healthy and harmonious way is a means of bringing together peoples of different cultures and traditions in a respectful and peaceful manner. Through the greater use of sport as dialogue and encounter, the Greek tradition of the Olympic Truce can give way to genuine and long-lasting peace.

In fact, dialogue and encounter through sport hold great potential in the area of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. While the rule of law and justice remain the foundations of durable peace, sport provides a tool enabling warring factions to come together for a common purpose. Such moments of unity may be brief and at times fleeting; nonetheless, they are an important reminder that, in human experience, there are many more things that bind us together than there are things that tear us apart. In that regard, my delegation notes with appreciation the work of the United Nations New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace to foster such dialogue in conflict-ridden places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia. We look forward to seeing greater consolidation of its activity.

In addition to fomenting dialogue across cultures and fostering peace, sport can serve as a means for greater personal and social development. Through sport, people develop creativity and talent, overcome personal challenges, acquire a sense of belonging and solidarity and learn discipline and a sense of sacrifice. Those values redound to the benefit of the greater community and help us understand the value of the common good over personal glory. Thus, we encourage sports figures to be models for youth and to help foster the positive values of sport.

Today's society has seen an increasing number of cases of abuse and deviance in the practice of sport, which lead to a sport culture devoid of human values. However, the world of sport continues to have authentic role models and generous protagonists who strive to reclaim the ideal of sport as a real school of humanity, camaraderie, solidarity and excellence. A renewed and widely shared emphasis on a human-centred approach to sport would help ensure that the important virtues learned through sport become one of the means for developing and fostering healthy and responsible human interaction.

The Holy See's Office for Church and Sports was created with that ideal of sport in mind. It works with schools, youth groups, amateur sport associations and athletic professionals to promote a healthy approach to sport and to help young people understand the positive impact that sport values can have on both the local and global communities.

The Olympic creed reminds us that the most important thing in life is not triumph, but struggle. May the 2008 Olympic Games contribute to the common struggle to make the world a better place for one and all through the promotion of the inseparable and mutually reinforcing values of peace, development and full respect for basic human rights.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 45 and its sub-items (a) and (b). Before proceeding to take action on draft resolution A/62/L.2, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Belize, the Gambia, Honduras, Lithuania and Zambia.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/62/L.2, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" under sub-item (b) of agenda item 45.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.2?

Draft resolution A/62/L.2 was adopted (resolution 62/4).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 45 and its sub-items (a) and (b).

Before I adjourn the meeting, and as announced earlier, I would like to invite members to remain seated for the informal segment after the adjournment of this meeting, to hear the President of the International Olympic Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations

A/62/PV.41

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

41st plenary meeting

Wednesday, 31 October 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim .... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 167

Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula

Draft resolution (A/62/L.4)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.4.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/62/L.4, entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula".

The inter-Korean summit held in Pyongyang from 2 to 4 October 2007 witnessed the adoption of the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity. The second of its kind since the year 2000, the summit provided an important opportunity to begin a new phase for peace, common prosperity and reunification on the Korean peninsula, by taking inter-Korean relations to a higher stage through the Joint Declaration of 15 June 2000 and the spirit of "by our nation itself".

The draft resolution welcomes and supports the inter-Korean summit, including its adoption of the Declaration, and encourages both sides to implement it scrupulously and in good faith. The draft also invites Member States to support and assist the current, positive process.

The adoption of the draft resolution will further contribute to the achievement of durable peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula and peace and stability in the rest of the world. Therefore, I hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea to also introduce draft resolution A/62/L.4.

Mr. Choi Young-jin (Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula". Issued as a document of the General Assembly under the symbol A/62/L.4, the draft resolution was jointly prepared and submitted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.

The inter-Korean summit was held from 2 to 4 October 2007 in Pyongyang, where President Roh Moo-hyun and Chairman Kim Jong Il adopted the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity. While reconfirming the commitment to peace and prosperity, which are consistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, that unique Declaration sets forth a paradigm that is intended to have salutary effects on future inter-Korean relations. The Declaration calls for both Koreas to work towards establishing a peace regime on the Korean peninsula, and this notion is consistent with the Korean peoples' ethos, which contemplates eventual reunification. To obviate military altercations, President Roh Moo-hyun

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and his counterpart agreed to set up a peace zone in the West Sea and explored the feasibility of designating the area as a common fisheries zone.

At the summit, both President Roh and Chairman Kim expressed their commitment to denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. This intention is reflected unequivocally in the Declaration, which calls on both sides to implement fully the 19 September Joint Declaration and the 13 February Agreement of the Six-Party Talks, so as to resolve the nuclear issue.

In tandem with the inter-Korean summit, the most recent round of the Six-Party Talks, held in Beijing, concluded on 3 October. At these talks, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea expressed its intention to disable its nuclear facilities in Yongbyon. The dynamics of the two meetings indicate that the Six-Party Talks and inter-Korean relations are progressing in a mutually reinforcing manner. Significant progress was also made in the economic and trade area.

The Gaeseong Industrial Complex, which is located in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and employs some 18,000 local workers, will be upgraded to accommodate further investments. The creation of an additional industrial complex in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is also being contemplated. To further economic development, the Gaeseong-Sinuiju railway, and the Gaeseong-Pyongyang expressway in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be improved for common use by both Koreas.

On the culture front, the two Koreas will cooperate closely at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Through its various provisions, the Declaration points the way forward for common prosperity, eventual peaceful reunification in the Korean peninsula and the resolution of longstanding regional concerns.

The Republic of Korea firmly believes that the inter-Korean summit and the resulting Declaration are positive developments, not only for both Koreas, but also for the international community as a whole.

It was exactly seven years ago today that the General Assembly adopted its resolution 55/11 under the same agenda item, welcoming and supporting the June 2000 inter-Korean summit and its joint declaration. I am confident that on this very special day Member States will once again demonstrate their support for advancing inter-Korean relations and peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula by adopting the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the European Free Trade Association Liechtenstein and Norway, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union is following with keen interest all efforts to reduce tension on the Korean peninsula. Accordingly, the EU supports any initiative conducive to the fostering of peace, stability and cooperation on the peninsula — namely, the adoption of a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly on peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula.

The EU fully supported the summit between President Roh Moo-hyun and General Secretary Kim Jong Il, held in Pyongyang on 2 to 4 October, as well as the outcome of this summit — the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity — and considers that it has contributed to the reinforcement of a growing atmosphere of confidence and trust on the Korean peninsula. In turn, the EU believes that this atmosphere will contribute to efforts within the framework of the Six-Party Talks, a process fully supported by the EU, to achieve complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Furthermore, the European Union looks forward to the follow-up to this initiative, starting with the meeting between the Prime Ministers of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, which will take place in November. The EU stands ready to contribute to the process of inter-Korean dialogue, reconciliation and reunification, as called for in the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, I would like to welcome the presence of the Secretary-General at this meeting.

In October 2007, the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea held a second summit meeting and adopted the

Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity. China welcomes this development.

Seven years ago, leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, with statesman-like vision, started North-South summit meetings, thus providing another important platform for the promotion of peace and reunification of the peninsula. This second summit between the two countries has indicated that the two sides have been working to seize this historic opportunity and start a new era of peace and prosperity for both nations.

The meeting of the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea was in line with the trend towards peace, development and cooperation in the world in the common interests of the two countries, and conducive to peace on the peninsula and peace and stability in our region.

As a friendly neighbour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, China attaches importance to maintaining peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and works towards that end. We have always advocated and supported the idea that the two sides on the peninsula should resolve their differences through dialogue, to advance the process of reconciliation continually and to achieve autonomous peace and reunification. China will, as always, work hard towards that goal.

Lastly, China supports the inclusion of the item of peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula on the agenda of the General Assembly this year, and we hope that the draft resolution proposed jointly by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea can be adopted as soon as possible.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): My delegation is very pleased to take part in the debate on this important item on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.

First and foremost, we wish to thank the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea for their joint efforts in introducing draft resolution A/62/L.4, entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula".

We are all very delighted to see the two Koreas working together in the interests of peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and in the region.

The second summit meeting, held in Pyongyang from 2 to 4 October 2007 between the two leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the Republic of Korea, and the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, which was adopted at the summit, are events of great historic significance. Viet Nam welcomes and highly appreciates the encouraging outcomes of these developments.

My country is convinced that this represents an important milestone in the process of improving and developing relations between the two Koreas. We firmly believe that the implementation of the outcomes of the summit and the Declaration on relations between the two Koreas will particularly contribute to promoting reconciliation, cooperation and the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in the region. It will also bring the Koreans closer to their long-held dreams of national reunification and prosperity.

Viet Nam will always hope for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. We consistently support the settlement of the issues relating to the Korean peninsula through dialogue and peaceful negotiations. We share the intense aspirations for peace and national reunification felt by the peoples of the North and of the South on the Korean peninsula.

Viet Nam has been following the developments on the Korean peninsula with keen interest. We urge the international community, and the United Nations in particular, to lend their strong support to the two Koreas in their efforts to give effect to the outcomes they have negotiated at the summit meeting, so that they can soon reach their common goals of national reconciliation and reunification.

As a country that enjoys good relations with both Koreas, Viet Nam is willing to contribute actively and positively to the improvement of relations between the two, as well as to the peace process on the Korean peninsula. We believe enhanced peace and stability on the Korean peninsula will further the cause of peace and security in North-East Asia, as well as in the world as a whole.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to express Japan's strong support for the draft resolution on "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" (A/62/L.4). Japan welcomes the recent inter-Korean summit as a symbolic event demonstrating the deepening of dialogue between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We believe that the inter-Korean summit has contributed to further advancing inter-Korean relations, as well as to easing tension on the Korean peninsula.

Japan welcomes the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, which was signed at the inter-Korean summit. It underscores that the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have agreed to work together to implement smoothly the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 and the 13 February 2007 agreement of the Six-Party Talks. We also welcome the commitment made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the outcome document of the Six-Party Talks issued on 3 October 2007, inter alia, to declare all nuclear programmes and to disable the three facilities at Yongbyon by the end of this year, as measures to be taken in the second phase for the implementation of the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005.

The denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is essential for the peace and stability of not only North-East Asia, but also of the entire international community. We consider it most important for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to implement these commitments fully. Japan continues to work actively towards a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue within the framework of the Six-Party Talks, with a view to comprehensively resolving outstanding issues, such as the abduction, nuclear and missile issues, settling the "unfortunate past" and realizing the normalization of relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, based on the Japan-Democratic People's Republic of Korea Pyongyang Declaration.

We sincerely hope that the adoption of the draft resolution will further promote the denuclearization process of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the resolution of other outstanding issues.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): The United States is pleased to support the draft resolution on "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" (A/62/L.4), which recognizes that dialogue and cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are essential not only for better relations on the peninsula, but also to promote peace and stability in the region and beyond. The United States has consistently encouraged such a dialogue.

We welcomed the historic inter-Korean summit that was held earlier this month and the Joint Declaration, adopted at that meeting, which outlines an ambitious agenda to improve relations and develop cooperative mechanisms on the Korean peninsula. We believe that this dialogue process is both supportive of and complementary to progress on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in the Six-Party talks.

The Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 calls for the directly related parties to negotiate a permanent peace regime on the Korean peninsula at an appropriate separate forum, a goal which is also enunciated in the inter-Korean Joint Declaration. The United States believes these discussions could begin among the directly related parties once the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has disabled its existing nuclear facilities, has provided a complete and correct declaration of all of its nuclear programmes and is clearly on the road to complete denuclearization. We can achieve a permanent peace arrangement on the Korean peninsula once the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fully discloses and abandons its nuclear weapons programme.

The United States will continue to support efforts to build better relations between the countries of North-East Asia through the Six-Party Talks and other appropriate mechanisms. We hope that the implementation of both the inter-Korean Joint Declaration and the full implementation of the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 will lead to better relations between the two Koreas, a transformed North-East Asia, and better lives for all the people of the Korean peninsula.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the introduction of the joint resolution on "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula (A/62/L.4) to the United Nations General Assembly. This is an important record of the second inter-Korean summit and endorses its central objective of bringing peace and stability to the Korean peninsula and of laying a further foundation for eventual reunification.

The security situation on the Korean peninsula affects the entire region, including New Zealand. Therefore, New Zealand welcomed the successful completion of the second inter-Korean summit between the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The meeting between President Roh Moo-hyun and Chairman Kim Jong Il was a valuable contribution to international efforts to achieve peace on the Korean peninsula, and it provides an important platform for more detailed discussions on a range of important security and economic issues between the two sides.

The summit builds on the recent momentum in the Six-Party Talks process and adds to an emerging atmosphere of reconciliation and open dialogue in the region, which we hope will lead to the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

New Zealand, along with the rest of the region, takes great interest in the inter-Korean dialogue, in the hope that it will serve to reinforce the growing environment of confidence and trust between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the wider international community. That is the spirit of the draft resolution to be adopted this afternoon, and we welcome it.

Mr. Alsaidi (Yemen): Let me start by congratulating the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the people of the Republic of Korea on the successful summit between their leaders, held during the first week of this month. The summit culminated in an agreement to build a permanent peace regime, to declare an end to the Korean war and to work for peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula. Most important, the leaders of both Koreas committed themselves to the establishment of peace and to the denuclearization of the peninsula.

Peace on the Korean peninsula is imperative for peaceful relations in North-East Asia, a vital region of the world. My country's sympathy with the aspirations of the Korean people is informed by its own experience as a divided country for more than 130 years. Yemen was reunified in May 1990. Constant conflict and turbulent relations, exacerbated by regional and global rivalries, had prevailed between the two parts of Yemen — a situation that was akin to the experiences of other divided countries, including the Koreas.

The closure of borders was the rule, not the exception, notwithstanding the torments and sufferings of divided families. Moreover, the Yemen Arab Republic — North Yemen — and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen — South Yemen — were constantly mobilizing their scarce resources for intra-Yemeni confrontations, which were, unfortunately, recurrent. By doing so, each side tried to impose its will on the other, by virtue of what it believed to be the superiority of its political system. Consequently, economic development suffered; sadly, it was relegated to the back burner, as opposed to what the elite of each side thought to be their raison d'être: unification of the country on their terms.

Many wars later, with precious resources having been wasted, reunification was finally realized. True, regional and global circumstances were conducive to the attainment of that noble objective. Meanwhile, a constitution for the prospective State was worked out in the interregnum between the many wars and the peace agreements. Its drafting took 10 years, and it is true that it was not without defects. But it was certainly an important step in a torturous and meandering journey towards peace between enemy brothers. It is also the case that reunified Yemen is not without difficulties; but what we have now is certainly far superior to the state of affairs that existed before 22 May 1990.

With that in mind, my delegation wholeheartedly supports draft resolution A/62/L.4. We encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to fully and unreservedly implement the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, because it is a sine qua non for peace, prosperity and tranquillity in a vibrant region of world.

Mr. Ney (Germany): Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

Allow me to state that Germany, itself speaking from the perspective of a reunified country, is pleased with the course taken by the inter-Korean summit between President Roh Moo-hyun and General Secretary Kim Jong Il, held in Pyongyang from 2 to 4 October this year. We understand that there is reason to be optimistic. In the course of the summit meeting, both sides — after some time — managed to craft a perspective for a lasting and peaceful solution on the Korean peninsula.

Germany attentively follows all efforts to decrease tensions on the Korean peninsula and looks upon the developments in that region with special sympathy. It is now, of course, up to the parties directly involved to create the conditions necessary for substantive negotiations on a peace treaty and to chart the course that will be followed.

We are fully aware that this noble cause cannot be achieved overnight and that it will depend on further progress within the framework of the Six-Party Talks. We also acknowledge that the situation on the Korean peninsula is quite different from that in which Germany found itself on the eve of unification. But what we have learned from our own experience is that the separation of a nation is not irreversible. The two Koreas will have to find their own way to tackle these issues, but Germany stands ready, upon request, to share its own experience from the years of German-German relations.

Germany is therefore delighted to support draft resolution A/62/L.4, thereby welcoming the opportunities and prospects for real peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula as laid out in the summit's Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): As a country with close ties to both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, Indonesia has constantly supported the process of inter-Korean dialogue, reconciliation and reunification. As a South-East Asian nation, Indonesia consistently recognizes the tremendous contribution that peace and stability on the Korean peninsula could offer to the wider East Asian region.

The inter-Korean summit held in Pyongyang early this month and the adopted declaration constitute a major milestone in inter-Korean relations. We welcome these developments. We believe that any progress in inter-Korean relations has positive significance for peace and security in the Korean peninsula and in the wider region. In this regard, we expressed our full support for the inclusion of this additional item, "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula", in the agenda of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, as we feel it incumbent upon the United Nations to welcome and encourage these developments.

We support the joint initiative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to table draft resolution A/62/L.4 before the General Assembly. We believe that the Assembly should encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to implement the declaration fully and in good faith and invite Member States to continue to support and assist, as appropriate, the process of inter-Korean dialogue, reconciliation and reunification.

It is our sincere hope that the draft resolution will enjoy unanimous support from Member States and will be adopted by the Assembly without a vote.

Mr. Pankrasin (Thailand): First of all, let me join other delegates in praising the fruitful outcome of the summit meeting held in Pyongyang early this month.

That high-level meeting contributed to consolidating peace on the Korean peninsula as the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea explored ways to increase mutual trust through political and military confidence-building measures, as well as ways to lay the groundwork for an eventual inter-Korean economic community. The success of this recent meeting not only reflects the strong desire of both sides to jointly promote cooperation and national reconciliation, but also marks progress towards peaceful reunification.

The Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, agreed by the two leaders on 4 October, represents a solemn commitment in improving inter-Korean relations. Thailand wishes both sides success in implementing the Declaration.

For a long period of time, the Korean peninsula has been a hot spot in North-East Asia and the globe as a whole. Since 1950, the tense situation of confrontation between the North and the South had been a cause of concern for peace and security in the Korean peninsula and in the North-East Asian region. The recent developments in relations between North and South have created a favourable environment and conditions for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula; this deserves universal praise from the global community at large.

Thailand stands ready to cooperate with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea as they work to implement fully the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity.

In this connection, Thailand is pleased to support the draft resolution introduced by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea (A/62/L.4) on "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula".

Mr. Yaroshevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus would like to welcome the draft resolution entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" (A/62/L.4), which was prepared jointly by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.

The agreements that were reached between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea at the Pyongyang summit a few weeks ago were not only a basis for the preparation of this draft resolution; they also mark an important milestone in improving inter-Korean relations and consolidating peace on the Korean peninsula, as well as in the North-East Asian region.

We note the adoption in Pyongyang of the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, which is an important stage in reconciling the two countries and in ensuring the peaceful reunification of the Korean people.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea have shown us all a very eloquent example of the fact that even the most complex and sensitive issues in relations between States can be resolved at the negotiating table. Goodwill, diplomacy, cooperation and a readiness to hear the other side, as opposed to confrontation, sanctions and threats — these are the guarantees of enhanced peace and security.

Belarus is very pleased at this opportunity to support the peace-loving efforts of both countries, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, and we call on all delegations to support draft resolution A/62/L.4.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation supports the adoption by the General Assembly of the draft resolution entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" (A/62/L.4). Our country has consistently called for dialogue and normalization of relations between the north and south of Korea.

As a close neighbour enjoying friendly relations with both Koreas, Russia welcomes the second inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang, which culminated in the signing of a joint Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity by the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. We certainly wish the greatest success for this agreement. We are ready to continue supporting any initiatives, including within the context of the draft resolution before us today, which aim at consolidating peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia as a whole.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada welcomes the introduction of draft resolution A/62/L.4, entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean Peninsula". We commend both the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for their renewed efforts towards peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula.

Canada is encouraged by the summit meeting held in Pyongyang earlier this month, a welcome step that can only enhance understanding between the two parties. We expect that this will contribute towards greater inter-Korean economic cooperation and the reduction of military tension, as well as to the realization of the Korean people's desire for peaceful reunification of the peninsula and greater stability in the region.

Canada encourages both sides to continue these efforts in good faith in order to implement fully the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity. It is only through continued mutual effort that the common goals of peace and prosperity can be reached and that the foundation for peaceful reunification can be properly laid.

Canada also hopes that this summit will reinforce the positive developments in the Six-Party Talks and help to advance efforts toward the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. A peaceful, prosperous Korean peninsula is in the interests not only of the region, but also of the entire international community. Canada stands ready to help in the achievement of these important goals.

Mr. Briz Gutiérrez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala firmly supports the draft resolution on peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula (A/62/L.4) submitted jointly by the two countries and we are pleased to reiterate our support, as we did for resolution 55/11 of 31 October 2000.

We were pleased to see the outcome of the summit held by the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea held in Pyongyang from 2 to 4 October 2007 and the joint Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, which represents a major milestone in improving communication and understanding between the two Koreas. We hope that the cooperation that led to the summit and its follow-up will ultimately lead to reconciliation on the peninsula and better security in the region, in accordance with the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter.

It is in that spirit that Guatemala has made its contribution to enhancing peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. On the one hand, we greatly value our long-standing bilateral relationship with the Republic of Korea, with which we have succeeded in developing trade, cultural and investment links, as well as official cooperation links. On the other hand, Guatemala and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea established diplomatic relations in September 2007 and our two countries will soon appoint non-resident ambassadors.

The Korean peninsula has been an area of great tension and a source of great concern for the entire international community. We welcome with satisfaction all efforts to foster confidence and deal with whatever questions remain to be solved. Guatemala hopes that the rapprochement between the two Koreas will continue to bear fruit, and we would like to encourage the continuation of the policy that both Governments have been carrying out.

Along those same lines, draft resolution A/62/L.4 contains a clear message from the international community of the nations represented in the United Nations for both States to continue to work on the process, applying the joint Declaration in good faith along with the other agreements arrived at by both parties, as well as all other measures that will lead to peacebuilding on the Korean peninsula and which will set solid foundations for a peaceful reunification.

We would also like to encourage Member States to support inter-Korean dialogue, reconciliation and reunification by providing whatever assistance may be required. We trust that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile is a country in the Pacific Basin, and thus we view with great hope the efforts made by two sister peoples for peace, reconciliation and reunification. They are countries of the Asian Pacific, sharing one language, one past and one destiny — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. The Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity that resulted from the Pyongyang summit is the outcome of a difficult and sensitive process by two States that are committed to reversing a history of struggle and grief. Those efforts have been a challenge to the political will of both countries and represent a promise for the future of the people of the Korean peninsula.

In the draft resolution submitted to the Assembly by the two Koreas (A/62/L.4) the international community bolsters those efforts and provides a global political context in which to continue the diplomatic initiatives already begun, including the Six-Party Talks and full implementation of the Beijing agreement of 13 February 2007, which will lead to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the re-establishment of a climate of trust in the region.

In 1996 our country was invited to become a member of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, one of many initiatives aimed at promoting peace and development on the Korean peninsula. We did so because of our commitment to peace and international security, by which we understand that no State, no matter what its economic standing or geographical location are, should fail to join in that noble effort to benefit the entire region and the world. Since then, our relations with the Korean people have improved and deepened. In fact, the first free trade treaty negotiated by the Republic of Korea exists between Chile and the Republic of Korea. We view the Korean peninsula and Korean culture as examples of tenacity, dignity and creative genius.

In voting in favour of the draft resolution, we are also extending our best wishes to the people of the two States, which, we hope, will sooner or later become the one nation that is certainly yearned for by the entire population of that great nation.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be now closed. I hear no objection.

It was so decided.

Mr. Towpik (Poland): Poland fully supports the statement made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. Nevertheless, I would like to take this opportunity to make some additional comments. For many years, Poland has been engaged in the stabilization efforts in the region, as well as in the process of reconciliation between the two Korean States. Since 1953 — that means for more than 50 years — we have been continuously participating in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission on the Korean peninsula.

Support for peace and security in the region has always been at the heart of Polish foreign policy, and that is why Poland sincerely welcomes and supports the draft resolution entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" (A/62/L.4). The fact that the resolution has been prepared and tabled jointly by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea has a particular, unprecedented and in fact historical significance.

The draft resolution and recent developments, such as the agreement reached in the framework of the Six-Party Talks, the inter-Korean summit and the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, raise prospects for real progress on the Korean peninsula. We strongly encourage the two Korean States to maintain this unique momentum and to fully implement recent multilateral and bilateral Korean agreements.

We hope that, after more than half a century of division, conflicts and tension, the two sides can establish mutual trust and strong inter-Korean relations to ensure peace and stability in the region, where the Korean people will be able to enjoy better lives.

Ms. Ochir (Mongolia): Mongolia wishes to extend its strong support to the draft resolution entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula", contained in document A/62/L.4. Mongolia is heartened by the outcome of the second inter-Korean summit, held in early October, which resulted in the adoption of the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity. Full and faithful implementation of the Declaration will be crucial in improving inter-Korean relations, consolidating peace on the Korean peninsula and laying a solid foundation for peaceful reunification.

As a North-East Asian nation with internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free status, Mongolia is pleased with the recent progress achieved in the Six-Party Talks on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In that regard, we welcome the agreement for the implementation of the second-phase steps and look forward to a speedy realization.

As its contribution towards advancing the Six-Party Talks, Mongolia hosted a bilateral working group session on the normalization of relations between Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in September this year and stands ready to continue such efforts in the future.

In light of the promising political dynamics in the subregion, Mongolia is optimistic that its early call for a multilateral security cooperation mechanism in North-East Asia will gain further support in the subregion and beyond.

Mr. Wai (Myanmar): The delegation of Myanmar extends its full support to draft resolution A/62/L.4 entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula". The draft resolution tabled jointly by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea is unique and commendable. My delegation congratulates the two sides on the success of their joint effort.

The summit meeting between the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea held in Pyongyang a few weeks ago and the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity are truly milestones in inter-Korean relations. Every effort towards peace is a welcome step. My delegation attaches great importance to the issue of the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula. Recent developments will further contribute to the cause of peace and security in North-East Asia and beyond.

Myanmar enjoys cordial, friendly relations with both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea and therefore fully supports the endeavours of the leaders of the two countries for peaceful reunification.

Myanmar views the recent developments on the Korean peninsula as a major step towards peace and prosperity for the people of Korea. The recent steps are in conformity with Myanmar's world view, which supports every effort to ensure world peace. Myanmar looks forward to seeing further developments in that respect and will continue to lend its support to all of the parties concerned.

My delegation is fully confident that the draft resolution will be adopted by the General Assembly by consensus.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like once again voice its appreciation to you, Sir, for the clear-sightedness with which you have been leading the work of the sixty-second session.

I wish to refer to the question of the peaceful reunification of Korea. My country, the Republic of Benin, has friendly relations with the two sister republics on the Korean peninsula. For a number of decades, Benin has been working to promote the peaceful reunification of the peninsula, because we are convinced that such reunification would lead to considerable improvement in the situation in the entire region in the political, economic and social spheres. Thus, the Government of Benin welcomes a reunification that would put an end to one of the most painful relics of the divisions caused by the Second World War.

For that reason my delegation is pleased to note the specific measures — constructive measures — taken by the two Korean leaders during these past months. We welcome, in particular, the success of the most recent inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang at the beginning of October, and we are pleased at the opening of new prospects for dialogue between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as is to be understood from the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity adopted by both leaders on 4 October 2007.

The Government of Benin strongly urges both countries to show each other increasing goodwill in stepping up and broadening the movement to overcome the obstacles between the two countries. The joyful accomplishment of that task will permit the Korean people to enjoy the benefits of peace, security and stability on all levels.

My delegation believes that the adoption of the draft resolution before the General Assembly (A/62/L.4) will make it possible to bring the endorsement of the United Nations to a process that has already been started by both countries and will give new impetus to the efforts of the international community to help the Korean people as a whole to overcome the tragic division. It is an approach that should be facilitated by the fact that it is supported by the consensus presently obtained between the two countries on the question. In other words, my delegation fully supports the draft resolution and calls on the General Assembly to adopt it as such.

Mr. Tarragô (Brazil): I would like to add my voice to those of previous speakers in welcoming the draft resolution introduced by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" (A/62/L.4). It is a most welcome initiative as it follows the landmark event of the second inter-Korean summit, held in early October in Pyongyang, during which the two Korean leaders reaffirmed the commitment of their respective Governments and peoples to dialogue, cooperation, prosperity and eventual reunification. The Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity is a major step forward to bringing inter-Korean relations to a higher stage of cooperation and understanding. The inter-Korean dialogue and the joint Korean initiatives on the issue in the General Assembly are evidence that this ongoing process of normalization on the peninsula is to be led first and foremost by the Korean people themselves with our support.

In this spirit, following the first inter-Korean summit in the year 2000, Brazil co-signed the request for the inclusion of an additional agenda item of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly and was a sponsor of resolution 55/11. We believe the General Assembly's adoption, by acclamation, of the draft resolution now before us (A/62/L.4) will once again demonstrate the international community's keen interest in a peaceful, secure, developed and reunified Korean peninsula.

Brazil considers that a unanimously adopted resolution of the General Assembly will give renewed impetus to the continuation and strengthening of the inter-Korean dialogue and to the promotion of sustainable peace and security on the Korean peninsula, as well as in North-East Asia and beyond.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): I should like to add a few remarks to the statement made by the European Union presidency, to which Italy fully aligns itself.

Italy has hailed the recent inter-Korean summit as a key step towards peace, stability, cooperation and eventual reunification on the peninsula. Its positive outcome is all the more gratifying for our country, as Italy, has constantly promoted the inter-Korean dialogue, even at the most difficult stages.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2000, Italy has hosted, in cooperation with scientific organizations, a number of seminars on stability and peace on the peninsula, to which both countries have actively participated. Moreover, Italy has been one of the major contributors to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization over the years.

Combined with the encouraging progress towards denuclearization, within the framework of the Six-Party Talks, the inter-Korean dialogue is creating the conditions for increased cooperation and stability on the peninsula and in the wider region. This is a strategic process that all Member States and relevant international organizations should support, as called for in the draft resolution before us (A/62/L.4). Italy is ready to play its part, including by increasing its assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the humanitarian, health, education and cultural sectors as announced by Deputy Foreign Minister Vernetti in his recent visit to the peninsula just before the summit.

Finally, we are particularly pleased that the General Assembly has been able to address, in a timely and consensual manner, such a topical issue. We believe that through initiatives like this one, the General Assembly reaffirms its relevance and its ability to meaningfully react to key international developments. That is the most effective way to pursue the objective of a revitalized and reinvigorated General Assembly, which has constantly been a priority for our delegation.

Mr. Islam (Bangladesh): Bangladesh welcomes the introduction of the draft resolution entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" (A/62/L.4). We also welcome the historic second inter-Korean summit, held from 2 to 4 October in Pyongyang.

Bangladesh strongly believes that constructive dialogue is the best way to reduce tension on the Korean peninsula. In that context, the second inter-Korean summit is an important milestone in the process of improvement and development of relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. We envisage that this advancement would finally result in a unified Korean in the near future. That is not only the long-held dream, but also the desire of the world community.

The United Nations should render all possible support to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea in their joint effort to materialize the outcomes of the second inter-Korean summit meeting. As a country that considers itself a friend of both Koreas, Bangladesh is willing to contribute actively and positively to the peace process on the Korean peninsula. We hope that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Elghitany (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation underlines its welcome of draft resolution A/62/L.4 entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula", sponsored by the delegations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. Also, my delegation would like to express Egypt's support of the content and thrust of the draft resolution which stresses the importance of promoting dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, in the interest of strengthening security on the Korean peninsula. That contributes to the stability of the North-East Asia region and actively embodies the efforts to implement United Nations principles and purposes for the maintenance of international peace and security.

There is no doubt that dialogue and serious negotiations among all parties concerned are the best means to positively address all issues in dispute. In this context, the delegation of Egypt welcomes the declaration issued on 4 October following the summit of the two Koreas on enhancing relations between them. Also, we support the goals and incentives of the declaration, which forms a solid foundation for achieving constructive steps towards rapprochement and reconciliation between the two countries so that eventually they will be peacefully reunified. That would enhance regional stability and peace as well as global security, which is a common goal for all of us.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba welcomes the draft resolution submitted jointly by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" (A/62/L.4). We believe that it clearly shows the positive results that can be obtained through dialogue and cooperation. Inter-Korean dialogue and cooperation are paramount for consolidating peace and security on the Korean peninsula and, also, to contributing to peace and stability in the region, as well as at the international level. Cuba has supported and continues to support the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula.

For this reason, my country welcomed the inter-Korean summit held from 2 to 4 October 2007 and the Declaration on the Advancement of North-South Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, adopted on 4 October as an outcome of the summit. We are pleased at the determination stated by both parties fully to implement the Declaration, as part of the process towards peaceful reunification.

During the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit Conference held last year in Havana, heads of State or Government stressed the importance of guaranteeing durable peace and security on the Korean peninsula for the sake of the common prosperity of the Korean people, as well as for the peace and security of North-East Asia and the rest of the world. Likewise, the NAM Summit expressed its support towards efforts to reunify the Korean peninsula based on the legitimate aspirations and concerted efforts of the Korean peoples themselves as stated in the joint declaration issued on 15 June 2000 at the historic North-South summit held in Pyongyang.

As in the past, Cuba will continue to fully support the process of inter-Korean dialogue, reconciliation and reunification.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/62/L.4. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.4?

Draft resolution A/62/L.4 was adopted (resolution 62/5).

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General: Allow me to welcome the General Assembly's adoption by consensus of resolution 62/5, entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula". I offer my sincere congratulations to the representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.

Today's date coincides exactly with the date seven years ago when the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/11 following the June 2000 summit of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. I welcome that coincidence. In my homeland of Korea, it is an ancient custom to choose an auspicious day for any celebration or new endeavour. Inevitably, I also look back on the preparations for the 2000 summit and on its follow-up, in which I was personally involved as Vice-Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea.

Today, as the Secretary-General, I feel a much more personal obligation to do all I can to encourage and facilitate the continuing work for peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula. I am convinced that the historic inter-Korean summit will pave the way for a permanent peace regime and eventual reunification. It will lead to increased inter-Korean reconciliation, cooperation and shared prosperity. I also believe it will act as a catalyst for continued progress in the Six-Party Talks on the denuclearization of the peninsula.

Once again, I commend the wisdom and courage of Chairman Kim Jong Il and President Roh Moo-hyun in seizing the momentum and taking this significant step forward. I also thank the General Assembly for its unanimous support for this resolution, which attests to the aspiration of the international community for peace and stability in the region.

It will now be of the utmost importance to implement fully the outcome of the summit. Every step in carrying out the agreed elements of the declaration will be an important measure for confidence-building on the peninsula. I encourage the leaders of both Koreas to maintain the momentum created by this historic turn of history. And I encourage all Member States — in particular those engaged in the Six-Party Talks — to lend their valuable support in sustaining a favourable atmosphere and assisting in the implementation of the outcome. As Secretary-General, I stand ready to provide every assistance required, in close cooperation with the international community.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 167?

It was so decided.

Statement by the President

The President: Before proceeding to the next item on the agenda, I wish to announce that this will be the last meeting of the General Assembly for Ms. Gail Grossman, Senior Conference Officer in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. Ms. Grossman has been with the United Nations for 34 years, for the majority of which she has been associated with the work of the plenary of the General Assembly. Her contribution to the smooth running of the meetings of the Assembly has been truly significant, and I would like the Assembly to give her a round of applause in appreciation. We wish Ms. Grossman all the best.

Agenda item 66

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children

Draft decision (A/62/L.8)

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/62/L.8, entitled "Participation of children and non-governmental organizations in the round tables of the Commemorative High-level Plenary Meeting Devoted to the Follow-up to the Outcome of the Special Session on Children".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft decision A/62/L.8?

Draft decision A/62/L.8 was adopted.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 66.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.

United Nations
A/62/PV.41/Corr.1

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

41st plenary meeting
Wednesday, 31 October 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

Corrigendum

Page 1, second column

The name for the speaker for the Republic of Korea should read **Mr. Kim Hyun Chong**

United Nations A/62/PV.42

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

42nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 1 November 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim .... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Bethel (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 73

Report of the International Court of Justice

Report of the International Court of Justice (A/62/4)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/171)

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the International Court of Justice?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In connection with this item, the Assembly also has before it the report (A/62/171) of the Secretary-General on the Secretary-General's Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the International Court of Justice.

I call on Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice.

Ms. Higgins: I am very pleased to address the General Assembly on the occasion of its examination of the report of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. The opportunity for the President to speak to the General Assembly on the occasion of the Court's report is a tradition which the Court greatly values.

All United Nations Members are ipso facto parties to the Court's Statute. There are thus 192 States currently parties to the Statute, 65 of which have accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court in accordance with article 36, paragraph 2, of the Statute. Furthermore, approximately 300 treaties refer to the Court in relation to the settlement of disputes arising from their application or interpretation.

The Court has been applying the working methods on which I reported last year — that is, always dealing with more than one case at a time, producing judgments in a timely fashion, taking short vacations and working intensely.

I am pleased to state that the Court has had a very productive year. This year it has already delivered three substantive judgments, one of them just three weeks ago and falling outside the period covered by the annual report. Even before 31 July, the Court had already handed down two judgments and one order on a request for the indication of provisional measures.

In addition, the Court has in this period completed hearings in three cases.

First, the Court heard oral argument on preliminary objections in the case concerning *Ahmadou Sadio Diallo (Republic of Guinea v. Democratic Republic of the Congo)* in November and December 2006, delivering its Judgment a short five months later.

Secondly, the Court also completed hearings on the merits in the case concerning *Maritime Delimitation between Nicaragua and Honduras in the*

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Caribbean Sea (Nicaragua v. Honduras) in March 2007, and that Judgment was delivered three weeks ago.

Finally, the Court also heard oral argument on the preliminary objections in the *Territorial and Maritime Dispute (Nicaragua v. Colombia)* case in June 2007, and that Judgment is under preparation.

I wish to emphasize that the judgments of the Court represent a work effort that fully engages its members throughout the year. Cases coming before the Court are never trivial matters. They are of immense importance to the countries concerned, which put in voluminous written pleadings and often ask for two rounds to explain their legal arguments and supporting materials.

In the *Malaysia/Singapore case*, for example, which begins next week, every judge must study some 4,000 pages. The parties are entitled to expect that we will examine every single thing they put before us — and we do. There follow the often lengthy oral arguments that the States concerned wish to make. And our work on the Judgment that will follow is collegial — it is not passed over to a *juge-rapporteur*.

We are, after all, the United Nations principal judicial organ, representing all the leading judicial systems of the world. So we, the judges, draft every word ourselves. All of us deliberate as to what our findings will be. A small drafting committee selected by the Court itself prepares the draft judgment, and every single judge is engaged in the collegial process of polishing and refining the judgment, making sure that no legal points are missed.

During the period under review, one new case was entered on the General List: *Certain Questions of Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Djibouti v. France)*. Djibouti filed an Application on 9 January 2006, but the Court took no action in the proceedings until France consented on 9 August 2006 to the Court's jurisdiction, pursuant to article 38, paragraph 5, of the Rules of Court.

The cases we have decided in this period have involved States of Latin America, Europe and Africa. The subject matter that interests the States of those regions has ranged from environmental matters to genocide to diplomatic protection of shareholders to maritime delimitation.

The current number of cases on the docket is 11. There are three cases between European States, three between Latin American States, two between African States and one between Asian States, whilst two are of an intercontinental character. The Court thus manifestly remains the court of the entire United Nations.

Today I plan, as is traditional, to report on the judgments rendered by the Court over the past year. I will deal with them in chronological order.

On 23 January 2007, the Court handed down an Order in the case concerning *Pulp Mills on the River Uruguay (Argentina v. Uruguay)* on a request for the indication of provisional measures submitted by Uruguay.

In May 2006, Argentina initiated proceedings against Uruguay concerning the construction of two pulp mills on the River Uruguay, which constitutes the border between the two States in that region. Argentina alleges that Uruguay unilaterally authorized the construction of the two pulp mills in violation of the obligations of the 1975 Statute of the River Uruguay, a treaty signed by the two States for "the optimum and rational utilization" of the river. Argentina claims that the mills pose a threat to the river and its environment, and are likely to impair the quality of the river's water and cause significant transboundary damage to Argentina.

In an Order dated 13 July 2006, the Court rejected a request by Argentina for the indication of provisional measures, finding that the circumstances at the time did not require it to exercise its power to indicate provisional measures.

On 29 November 2006, Uruguay submitted its own request for the indication of provisional measures, on the ground that since 20 November 2006 organized groups of Argentine citizens had blockaded a vital international bridge over the river, that this was causing great economic damage to Uruguay, and that Argentina had taken no steps to put an end to the blockade.

Uruguay requested the Court to order Argentina, first, to take "all reasonable and appropriate steps to prevent or end the interruption of transit between Uruguay and Argentina"; secondly, to abstain from actions that might aggravate, extend or make more difficult the settlement of the dispute; and, thirdly, to abstain from any other measure that might prejudice the rights of Uruguay in dispute before the Court.

In its Order of 23 January 2007, the Court found that the circumstances, as they then presented themselves to the Court, were not such as to require the exercise of its power to indicate provisional measures. In this regard, the Court was not convinced that the blockades risked prejudicing irreparably the rights that Uruguay claimed on the basis of the 1975 Statute, nor that, were there such a risk, it was imminent. The Court observed that, despite the blockades, the construction of one of the pulp mills had progressed significantly since the summer of 2006, and that work continued.

Argentina and Uruguay have since elected to have a second round of written pleadings, and the Court has fixed 29 July 2008 as the time limit for the filing of the last of those pleadings.

On 26 February 2007, the Court rendered its Judgment in the case concerning *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro)*. This is the first case before any court in which allegations of genocide have been made by one State against another.

The Court had already found that it had jurisdiction, in a previous Judgment rejecting the preliminary objections raised by the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. However, the Respondent was permitted to address the Court on renewed issues of jurisdiction said to arise out of its admission as a Member of the United Nations in 2000.

In its Judgment of 26 February 2007, the Court affirmed that it had jurisdiction on the basis of article IX of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Court noted that, since its jurisdiction was based solely on the Genocide Convention, it could only rule on genocide and associated violations of that Convention, and could not rule on breaches of other obligations of international law.

The Court initially determined that States parties to the Genocide Convention were bound not to commit genocide or any of the other acts prohibited in the Convention through the actions of their organs or persons or groups whose acts were attributable to them. It also noted that, in order to make a finding of genocide, it was necessary to establish specific intent to destroy the protected group as such, in whole or in part. The Court considered that the protected group in the case was that of the Bosnian Muslims.

In its Judgment, the Court made extensive and detailed findings of fact as to whether alleged atrocities had occurred, and, if so, whether the facts established the specific intent to destroy in whole or in part the group of the Bosnian Muslims. The Court examined the factual allegations according to the categories of prohibited acts set out in the Genocide Convention: killing; causing serious bodily or mental harm; deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the group; preventing births within the group; and transferring children to another group.

The Court found that there was overwhelming evidence that massive killings and many other atrocities had been perpetrated during the conflict, but it could not find, on the basis of the evidence before it, that those acts were committed with the specific intent to destroy in whole or in part the group of the Bosnian Muslims. However, the Court did find that the killing of more than 7,000 Bosnian Muslim men at Srebrenica by Bosnian Serb forces had been accompanied by the intent to destroy in whole or in part the group of the Bosnian Muslims. Accordingly, it found that those events in Srebrenica constituted genocide.

The Court then turned to the question of whether it could be established that the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had been responsible for the genocide committed at Srebrenica. Judging on the basis of the materials put before it, the Court found that the acts of genocide had not been committed by persons or entities that could be considered to be organs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Court further found that it had not been established that the massacres were committed on the instructions or under the direction of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, nor that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia exercised effective control over the operation in question.

Consequently, in the light of the information available to it, the Court found that the acts of those who committed genocide at Srebrenica could not be attributed to the Respondent under the rules of international law on State responsibility.

The Court did, however, find that the Respondent had violated its obligation under article I of the Genocide Convention to prevent the genocide in Srebrenica. The Court noted that, owing to the strength of the political, military and financial links between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian Serbs, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had been in a position of influence over the Bosnian Serbs who devised and implemented the genocide in Srebrenica.

The Court found that, despite the fact that the Respondent was aware, or should normally have been aware, of the serious risk of genocide in Srebrenica, it had not shown that it employed all means reasonably available to it in order to prevent the atrocities.

The Court further held that the Respondent had violated its obligation under article VI of the Genocide Convention to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia with respect to the arrest and handing over for trial of General Mladić, and thus violated its obligation to punish genocide under article I of the Convention.

Finally, the Court found that the Respondent had breached the Court's earlier Orders, including provisional measures, by failing to take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of genocide and to ensure that any organizations and persons which might be subject to its influence did not commit acts of genocide.

As regards reparations for the Respondent's violation of the obligation to prevent genocide, the Court recalled that the Applicant had in fact suggested that a declaration of the Court would itself be appropriate satisfaction, and it made a declaration to that effect.

As for the obligation to punish acts of genocide, the Court found that a declaration in the operative clause that the Respondent had violated its obligations under the Convention and that it must immediately take effective steps to comply with the obligation to punish acts of genocide, to transfer individuals accused of genocide to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and fully to cooperate with that Tribunal, would constitute the appropriate satisfaction.

After having considered disputes in South America and Europe, the Court next turned to Africa.

On 24 May 2007, the Court handed down its Judgment on the admissibility of the Application in the case concerning Ahmadou Sadio Diallo brought by the Republic of Guinea against the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The case raised important issues relating to the diplomatic protection by States of their nationals. It concerned Mr. Diallo, a businessman of Guinean nationality who was resident in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 32 years and was the *gérant of and associé* — a type of shareholder — in two companies incorporated under Congolese law, named Africom-Zaire and Africontainers-Zaire.

Guinea claimed that Mr. Diallo was unjustly imprisoned by the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; that he was deprived of his investments, businesses, property and bank accounts; and, finally, that he was expelled from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Guinea argued that those actions by the Democratic Republic of the Congo violated Mr. Diallo's rights, and that, according to the law of diplomatic protection, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had committed internationally wrongful acts which engaged its responsibility to Guinea.

The Court noted that Guinea sought to exercise diplomatic protection with regard to Mr. Diallo for the violation of the three categories of rights: Mr. Diallo's individual personal rights; his direct rights as an associé in Africom-Zaire and Africontainers-Zaire; and the rights of those companies themselves by "substitution".

With regard to Mr. Diallo's individual rights, the Court found that Guinea had standing to seek to protect those rights, since Mr. Diallo had Guinean nationality. It further found that this part of the Application was admissible, since Mr. Diallo had exhausted all available and effective remedies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo against the violation of his rights.

Turning to Mr. Diallo's direct rights as *associé*, the Court, having considered Congolese company law and the relevant law of diplomatic protection, held that Guinea also had standing to seek to protect those rights. It further held that this part of the Application was admissible, since Mr. Diallo had exhausted all available and effective remedies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo against the violation of his rights as *associé*.

The complicated part of the case was whether Guinea could exercise diplomatic protection of Mr. Diallo with respect to alleged violations of the rights of the two companies of Congolese nationality, Africom-Zaire and Africontainers-Zaire. This is also known as the theory of diplomatic protection "by substitution". It seeks to allow a State to indirectly offer protection to its nationals who are shareholders in a company of a different nationality in situations in which the rights of those shareholders are not protected under a treaty, and no other remedy is available, because the allegedly unlawful acts were committed against the company by the State of its own nationality. This would be an exception to the usual rule in international law that the right of diplomatic protection of the company may only be exercised by the State of nationality of the company.

Having carefully examined the practice of States and the decisions of international courts and tribunals on this question, the Court concluded that, at least at the present time, there was no established exception in international law allowing for diplomatic protection by substitution. Guinea therefore had no standing to seek to protect the rights of the two companies, and this part of the Application was inadmissible.

The Court has now fixed the time limit for the filing of written pleadings on the merits by the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I turn to what is next on the horizon for the International Court.

Next week we begin public hearings on the merits in the case concerning *Sovereignty over Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge (Malaysia/Singapore)*.

I am glad to inform the Assembly that the Court has decided to open hearings on 21 January 2008 in the case *Certain Questions of Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Djibouti v. France)*.

Later in the year, we will hold hearings in the cases concerning *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia and Montenegro)* and *Maritime Delimitation in the Black Sea (Romania v. Ukraine)*.

Last year I informed the Assembly that our aim was to increase further our throughput while retaining the high quality of our judgments. As I believe must be apparent from what I have reported today, we have indeed made much progress.

The Court has always delivered its judgments within a reasonable time after the conclusion of hearings in a case. There has never been a problem with that phase of proceedings. But we have in the past had problems with the scheduling of oral hearings, and a backlog had built up. By "backlog", I mean a State having to wait an unreasonably long time after the deposit of its written pleadings for oral hearings to be scheduled.

At the beginning of 2006, it seemed possible that if we made a prodigious effort we would be able to clear the backlog of cases by 2008. I am extremely happy to report that we have essentially reached that stage now. In planning our schedule for the coming year, we were in a position to hear any cases in which the parties had exchanged a single round of pleadings and were ready to be heard.

In some instances, of course, States prefer to have an extra round of written pleadings, so we will wait until that process is completed before scheduling the oral hearings. Thus, some occasional delay in bringing on the oral hearings is now a product of the choice of the States to ask for a further written round, and not of any backlog in the Court.

The important thing is that States thinking of coming to the International Court can today be confident that as soon as they have finished their written exchanges we will be ready to move to the oral stage in a timely manner.

That goal having been achieved, our push for efficiency continues. Unfortunately, we have had to spend more time than we would have wished this year on a matter not of our choosing. I am referring to the consequences of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 61/262, "Conditions of service and compensation for officials other than Secretariat officials: members of the International Court of Justice and judges and ad litem judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda".

Informed at the last moment of the imminent adoption of that resolution, on which the Court had not been consulted, I sent a letter to the President of the General Assembly, which was circulated to all permanent representatives, expressing the Court's deep concern that the proposed action regarding emoluments under the resolution would create inequality among judges, which is prohibited under the Court's Statute.

That issue will be addressed in the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on conditions of service and compensation for officials other than Secretariat officials.

A memorandum that the Court produced in July to assist the Office of the Secretary-General in the preparation of that forthcoming report clearly lays out the serious legal consequences arising out of resolution 61/262, including the fact that it establishes a transitional measure that draws a distinction between current judges of the Court and those judges elected after 1 January 2007. That will result in judges elected after 1 January 2007 having an income substantially below the current remuneration. It will be the first time in the history of the United Nations that judicial salary levels have been reduced. And it would be without precedent — this is the key point — for judges on the same Bench to receive different salaries.

Equality between the judges of the International Court is one of the fundamental principles underlying its Statute. It should be recalled that the parties appearing before the Court are sovereign States, not individuals or corporations. Although judges serve as independent members of the judiciary, States are entitled to assume that a judge of their nationality, whose election they have worked hard for, is in a position of full equality with all other judges on the Bench.

No discrepancy in treatment can be allowed to exist, not only among permanent judges, but also between permanent judges and judges ad hoc — that is, judges chosen by States parties to a litigation not having a national on the Bench — or between two judges ad hoc. Indeed, that is what the Statute of the Court requires. The Statute is an integral part of the United Nations Charter, attached to the Charter, and has a central status in United Nations instruments. It is not just to be ignored or put aside.

Let me put this to the Assembly in graphic terms, and ask Member States this: "When you come to the Court with a case and you do not have a judge of your nationality on the Bench, are you going to be pleased that the judge ad hoc to whom you are entitled will be paid less than the rest of us, and perhaps less than the judge ad hoc nominated by the other party, if that other judge ad hoc was appointed before January 2007? Was that really what you thought you were achieving when you adopted resolution 61/262?"

I cannot believe that any State represented in this Hall wishes to put judges of its own nationality in a position of financial inferiority to others. Nor do Member States wish to see the Statute of the Court violated.

The deep irony is that paragraph 7 of resolution 61/262 — the purpose of which was to address certain budgetary matters related to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda — in fact at the present time has its negative impact only on the International Court of Justice.

No further elections are envisaged for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia until 2009, and the Tribunal until then has a sufficiency of judges ad litem for its work. If the term of office of its judges were to be extended in 2009, instead of there being new elections upon the end of their current term, the adverse impact of the provisions of paragraph 7 of resolution 61/262 would even then concern only the International Court of Justice. Moreover, there may well be no new elections for the International Criminal Court for Rwanda.

So the International Court of Justice stands alone at the moment in bearing the negative impact of the resolution and all the problems of principle that it brings with it about the equality of judges under the Court's Statute. We have cases here and now where judges ad hoc are coming, and the Statute clearly requires that they be in a position of full equality with other judges and with each other. Further, the Court will have elections for new judges in autumn 2008.

I do not believe that the Fifth Committee and the Assembly ever meant that the Court alone should be put into a disadvantageous situation. I do not believe that the Fifth Committee and the Assembly ever meant to put the Court in conflict with its Statute. I do not believe that they ever meant to create awkward situations for States appearing in front of the Court.

For our part, we appreciate the understandable objectives behind the resolution, both as regards transparency and as regards putting the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda back into a position of real equality with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice. I am hopeful that the Secretary-General's forthcoming report on conditions of service and compensation for officials other than Secretariat officials will provide some solutions that will meet all of our legitimate needs and concerns.

The Assembly will remember that last year I also highlighted one matter in the International Court's budget request for 2008-2009: the request for nine P-2 law clerks, which would enable us to achieve a full complement of one law clerk for each member of the Court — a request first raised nine years ago by President Schwebel. I explained to the Assembly that this form of assistance is routinely provided to every other international court and tribunal, and many senior national courts. Each of the judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia and indeed the International Criminal Court, just beginning its work, has a law clerk.

Law clerks can do the sort of support work for us, such as researching, analysing and laying out data, that will allow the judges to get on with addressing legal issues, drafting the judgments and maximizing the service we provide to the United Nations membership.

If we are granted a limited number of extra law clerks, of course that will be an appreciated gesture by the United Nations. But it remains the case that we need a law clerk each, in view of the increasing number of fact-intensive cases and the rising importance of researching and evaluating diverse materials.

This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the 1907 Hague Peace Conference; various events have been held at The Hague to mark this centenary. It was at the Hague Peace Conference that the idea of a standing international court was born. The momentum towards the launching of an international court was interrupted by the First World War, but the founding of the Permanent Court of International Justice in 1922 and its legal continuation as the International Court of Justice in 1946 were clearly inspired by the ideas of 1907.

Dispute settlement has assumed a greater and greater importance in the past century. Provision for judicial settlement is routinely included, in one form or another, in the vast majority of multilateral treaties. The past two decades have seen the burgeoning of international courts and tribunals equipped to deal with disputes that might arise under the growing reach of international law.

The interest of States in the International Court has continued to flourish. The Court has handed down 94 judgments in its 60 years of existence; of those, one third have been delivered in the last decade. I assure the Assembly that the Court will continue to work with dedication and its customary impartiality. Our aim is to meet the expectations of those States that trust us to find a solution for them in a timely fashion, while always maintaining the high standard of our decisions, born of a collegial working method in which every judge is involved in each stage of a case. We have made great progress in that regard, and we will continue our efforts in the year to come.

Mr. van Bohemen (New Zealand): On behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ), I thank the President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Rosalyn Higgins, for her excellent report on the work of the Court over the past year.

CANZ continues strongly to support the Court in its role as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

This year the Court has had a full caseload that is notable not only for the regional diversity of the parties, but also for the increasing diversity of subject matter. We find it encouraging that there is a growing interest of States in using the Court to resolve issues that go beyond "classic" disputes, such as maritime delimitation, to matters such as questions of environmental law and violations of human rights.

That has been illustrated this year by the case concerning the Genocide Convention. As President Higgins has just noted, this is the first case in any court in which allegations of genocide have been made by one State against another. Such cases illustrate the value of the Court's contribution to international peace and security and the development of important issues of international law.

CANZ recognizes that the Court will have a similar caseload in the coming year. As Judge Higgins has reported, however, the Court will have the advantage that it has effectively cleared its backlog of hearings. We commend the Court for this achievement and for the positive steps it has taken for increased efficiency through issuing practice directions and having meetings for strategic planning.

We recognize, nonetheless, that adequate resources are required to enable the Court to handle cases in a timely fashion. We therefore support consideration of measures that apply in comparable courts to meet this goal.

We listened carefully to President Higgins's concerns relating to the impact of resolution 61/262 on the salaries of the judges of the Court. We understand this matter to be of importance to the judges, and CANZ is ready to discuss these issues further during the sixty-second session.

The launch this year of the improved Court website is a welcome development. With a searchable database of every decision since 1946, the website is an excellent resource that will greatly benefit judges, media, scholars and the general public worldwide.

The International Court plays a vital role in the peaceful settlement of international disputes and in strengthening the international legal order, as mandated by the Charter. Wider acceptance of its compulsory jurisdiction enables the Court to fulfil its role more effectively. Accordingly, we continue to urge Member States that have not done so to deposit with the Secretary-General a declaration of acceptance of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction.

Mr. Kamal (Egypt): I start by expressing Egypt's appreciation for the valuable introduction by Ms. Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), of the Court's report on its work last year.

I wish to emphasize Egypt's belief in the International Court's major role in securing implementation of the provisions of international law, in adjudicating conflicts between States and in providing States and international organizations with advisory opinions to help them perform their role in the best possible manner.

Since its inception, the Court has reinforced important international legal norms and principles through its *Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, the *Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* and its most recent decision on the *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro)* in respect of the Srebrenica massacre. That last decision, on Bosnia and Herzegovina, put an end to a horrendous stage of conflict in the Balkan region and consecrated the concept of a State's responsibility to take all measures to prevent genocide on its territory based on ethnicity, religion or language.

The Court's experience over the years has shown the need to reinforce the capacity of States, the United Nations and its specialized agencies in requesting the opinion of the Court in matters that are difficult to deal with unilaterally. These are based on the legal and moral value of the judgments and advisory opinions issued by the Court. These judgments and opinions contribute to enriching, developing and codifying the rules of international law, and entrench the principles of justice and equality at the international level, thus reflecting positively in terms of enhancing international peace and security.

Hence, for the United Nations reform process to be comprehensive and inclusive, it must include the International Court of Justice, since this is one of the Organization's major organs; this would guarantee the effectiveness of the United Nations and its ability to keep abreast with the requirements of the times, without confining reform to the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document decisions tasked Member States with studying means of strengthening the Court. However, the United Nations has yet to witness discussion of any initiative or study in this regard. This makes it incumbent upon us to adopt a clear position and take serious measures in order to activate the role of the Court and harness its legal potential to the optimum extent.

Perhaps this would require the Court itself to project its vision of the development of its role in the judicial and legal realm. There is no doubt that the role of the International Court of Justice should expand to deal with the most contentions cases raised lately at the United Nations.

Therefore, we were pleased to observe the latest Judgment of the Court on the allegations of serious violations of human rights, including the crime of genocide, in Srebrenica. However, we hope that the Court, through its judgments in such cases, will establish clear legal norms to guarantee that the United Nations deals effectively with the most serious of crimes, such as aggression and war crimes.

We also look forward to the Court's dealing with the current contradiction regarding human rights, through which some are trying to suggest that their national standards are more worthy of application on the international level, without taking into account the diversity of cultures, civilizations and religions. This poses an element of increasing danger to all humanity.

With regard to the management of natural resources, we feel that the Court has a more important role to play in enabling developing countries to realize their development aspirations, through consolidating strong legal norms that affirm the sovereignty of States over their natural resources. The era of occupation and exploitation by the occupier of the natural resources of the occupied State is over, and a new international order has been put in place, based on cooperation between countries of the North and those of the South. There is no doubt that such an order will increase the burden on the Court to establish general legal principles to deal effectively with it, in accordance with the rules of international law.

Regarding the question of diplomatic protection, we are very pleased that the Court is dealing with this issue, especially in the light of the attempts by some to shy away from their obligations on the basis of illegal considerations relating to security or to the international war on terrorism.

We affirm the need to revert to the principal rules of international law, above all the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, and other such conventions that are the mainstay of international relations and that are violated daily by some on ethnic, religious or political grounds.

The delegation of Egypt supports the request of the ICJ to establish nine law clerk posts, as well as the establishment of a senior official post, in the biennial programme budget for 2008-2009, for the reasons contained in paragraph 23 of the report's summary.

At the same time, our delegation affirms that the judgments of the Court should remain the responsibility of the judges themselves, since they represent the living legal conscience of the international system and are the defenders of the implementation of the rulings.

Our delegation will work with others in the Fifth Committee in order to respond to such requests, especially since they come at a time of increasing international efforts to revitalize the Organization in the discharge of its role in the context of international legality, to preserve international public order, in accordance with the principles we agreed on when the United Nations was established.

Finally, the delegation of Egypt expresses its appreciation to all the judges of the Court, its President, Registrar and staff for their efforts during the year under consideration, and we wish them success in discharging the desired role of the Court in the future.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Rosalyn Higgins, for her comprehensive and detailed presentation of the annual report on the work of the Court. I would also like to convey to Judge Higgins my Government's recognition of the invaluable work done by all the judges of the International Court.

The number of cases on the docket of the International Court of Justice shows the growing will of States to resolve their judicial disputes by peaceful means, as well as the confidence that the international community has in the impartiality, independence and professionalism of the one universal international tribunal with general jurisdiction.

With regard to the legal proceedings this year, we wish to mention the recent decisions of the Court on cases under its jurisdiction that have led, particularly in the case of our region, to the resolution of disputes and the broadening of spaces of cooperation and friendship between neighbouring countries.

Peru considers it of the utmost importance that the jurisdiction of the Court be universally accepted. We therefore call upon all States that have not yet done so to consider accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court over disputes.

The Court's contribution in its advisory capacity is also very important. Peru urges organs of the United Nations and the relevant international organizations to request of the Court advisory opinions with a view to resolving legal disputes.

The high cost of litigation at the international level means that some countries, especially developing countries, may be deterred from resorting to the Court. In order to make recourse to international justice more accessible for them, the Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the International Court of Justice was created in 1989. Peru is grateful to States that have contributed to the Fund, and joins in the repeated appeal of the Secretary-General to States, intergovernmental organizations, national institutions and non-governmental organizations, as well as legal persons — both individuals and entities — to make financial contributions to it.

The administration of justice should be efficient and timely. The Court has recognized that need, and for that reason constantly improves its working methods. In that regard, we commend the recent changes to its Practice Directions, and encourage it to continue considering such measures.

Similarly, aware of the universal importance of its work, the Court continues to improve its information tools. In particular, I wish to mention its new website, launched last April, which contains very full information on its activities; it is an excellent source of information. We await with interest the improvements which have been announced, with the inclusion of audio and video material from hearings.

It is necessary to preserve and strengthen the valuable support that the International Court of Justice gives to the maintenance of international peace and security, as an ideal setting for the peaceful resolution of legal disputes between States, the development of international law and the operation of the rule of law at the international level.

To shoulder that great responsibility, the Court must have adequate resources. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions must consider, bearing in mind the international system as a whole, the Court's request for law clerks for the judges. We should ensure that all members of the Court, permanent and ad hoc, receive the same treatment.

Peru understands the needs of the Court, and supports the requests presented by Judge Rosalyn Higgins.

Mr. Qasuri (Pakistan): I thank Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice, for presenting the latest report of the Court, on its work between August 2006 and July 2007. I also thank her for her detailed and thought-provoking briefing.

Justice and the rule of law are key to an orderly international society. The need for international legal order and justice has never been as acutely felt as it is today. Justice and fairness have become an integral requirement of present-day existence and are critical to the realization of all human rights, peaceful coexistence and cooperation among Member States.

Pakistan recognizes the International Court of Justice as the international court of a universal character with general jurisdiction. All 192 Member States of the United Nations are States parties to its Statute. Pakistan is not only a signatory, but is one of the 65 countries that have deposited a declaration with the Secretary-General accepting the Court's compulsory jurisdiction in accordance with Article 36 of its Statute. That speaks volumes for Pakistan's respect for the rule of law and access to justice.

We have taken note of the fact that about 300 bilateral and multilateral treaties provide for the Court to have jurisdiction in the resolution of disputes arising out of their interpretation and implementation. We also recognize the Court's jurisdiction in the situations of *forum prorogatum* arising from the implementation of article 38 of the Rules of Court.

We support the recommendation in the report that the Court may be consulted by the General Assembly, the Security Council, and other organs of the United Nations and specialized agencies authorized by the General Assembly, on legal questions arising in the scope of their activities. That could facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes, as annunciated in the Charter. The rule of law is a much better option than the rule of thumb for world peace and security.

The Charter, in Chapter VI, offers vast possibilities for the United Nations and its organs to play an important role in the pacific settlement of disputes and conflict prevention. Article 36, paragraph 3, of the Charter sets out the role of the Court in the settlement of disputes. Article 1, paragraph 1, recognizes that the settlement of international disputes "by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law" is one of the basic principles of the United Nations. Hence, the Security Council should make the maximum possible use of its powers under Articles 36 and 37 to recommend that legal disputes be referred to the Court as a general rule. That would bring a desirable balance to an otherwise unfavourable political tilt so visible at the United Nations level.

Those provisions offer a wide range of options to Member States and the United Nations for the settlement of disputes. It is up to them to make the best possible use of the facilities.

The Court has uniquely contributed to the interpretation and development of customary international law. Its work and decisions are closely monitored by Member States, the international legal fraternity and others, as the Court plays an important role in the implementation and promotion of the rule of law at the international level.

We have studied the Court's five decisions delivered during the period under consideration. The recent decisions indicate that the Court has adopted a cautious approach.

The Court in January 2007 delivered a Judgment in the *Pulp Mills on the River Uruguay (Argentina v. Uruguay)* case. Uruguay was of the view that an influential group of people in Argentina had blocked a vital international bridge over the Uruguay River, thus causing enormous economic damage to Uruguay. Uruguay further pleaded to the Court that Argentina should take all reasonable and appropriate steps to prevent the damage.

The Court, on the basis of the circumstances presented to it at the time of the decision, declined to use its power under Article 41 of its Statute. The factual evidence, not other limitations, provided the basis for the decision.

The Court's decision in February 2007 in the genocide case, *Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*, was very important. It was the first legal case in which allegations of genocide had been made by one State against another.

On the jurisdictional part of the case, it was clarified that the Court had jurisdiction to give a judgment, as that issue had been decided in an earlier case. The new basis of challenge to the Court's jurisdiction was also rejected. The Court found that

> "the killings in Srebrenica in July 1995 were committed with the specific intent to destroy in part the group of the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina in that area and … what happened there was indeed genocide." (*A/62/4, para. 15*)

The Court found that Serbia had violated its obligations contained in article 1 of the Genocide Convention.

On the point of State responsibility, some new questions emerged. Draft article 4 of the International Law Commission's draft articles on State responsibility states that a State is responsible for an act if an organ of the State is involved. The Court found that some members of the army of the Republika Srpska Main Staff were involved in the genocide. To some this amounted to the involvement of a State organ, as involvement of a State organ in an act could be proved through the involvement of its personnel, especially Main Staff. The Court remained shy of accepting this.

In May 2007, in the *Ahmadou Sadio Diallo (Republic of Guinea v. Democratic Republic of the Congo)* Judgment, on the point of diplomatic protection by substitution, the Court upheld Ahmadou's rights as an individual and direct shareholder. However, due to the lack of exceptions in customary international law on allowing protection on the basis of substitution, the Court did not allow protection by substitution.

We have noted the Court's request to the United Nations for additional staff, including nine law clerk posts and one additional post of a senior official in the Department of Legal Matters. In recent years the Court's work has gradually expanded. The judges have few clerks at their disposal; hence, they are compelled to share these human resources.

Although the Court was established in 1946, one third of its judgments and half of its orders have been rendered in the last 10 years. Therefore, the request for expansion of the cadre is justified, and my delegation supports the addition of those new posts in the Court's Department of Legal Matters.

The rule of law and access to justice are the sine qua non of democracy and good governance. That, in turn, is the surest guarantee of world peace, human dignity and the sovereign equality of States.

Mr. El Hadj Ali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): First, I thank Judge Rosalyn Higgins for her introduction of the annual report of the International Court of Justice. She has given a detailed picture of the accomplishments and exceptional role still played by that supreme institution of international justice.

For more than 60 years now, the International Court of Justice has spared no effort in fully playing the role assigned to it by the Charter: the promotion of the ideals of law through the peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use of force and the advancement of international law, and thus of the primacy of the rule of law in international relations.

Our heads of State and Government, it must be remembered, strongly reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit the obligation upon States to settle disputes by peaceful means, pursuant to Chapter VI of the Charter, including, if necessary, by referring them to the International Court of Justice.

The judgments of the Court in the past 60 years have dealt with disputes over matters of various kinds, including States' navigation rights, nationality, asylum, expropriation, law of the sea and land and maritime borders. Its judgments, as well as its advisory opinions, have considerably helped in the gradual codification of international law.

Last year, the Court handed down two judgments and one order on a request for the indication of provisional measures. Yet the number of cases on the Court's docket still remains high, as the report emphasizes.

The diversity, complexity and growing number of cases submitted to the Court demonstrate the increased confidence of the various parties in the competence, impartiality and independence of that institution. Such a trend should be not just welcomed, but encouraged, particularly among developing countries.

That noteworthy expansion is taking place in parallel with the growth of new international, regional and specialized judicial bodies, a phenomenon that in part responds to a real need felt at the international level. The results seem to be of additional usefulness to international justice.

The International Court, for example, has had to address the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the case of *Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*. Such an approach — rightly positive — will foster more harmonization and reduce possible conflicts between existing international jurisdictions.

Algeria welcomes the Judgments of the Court in 2006-2007 in the case pertaining to the *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro)*, and that concerning the admissibility of the application made by the Republic of Guinea in the *Ahmadou Sadio Diallo* case, as well as the recent *Judgment on Maritime Delimitation between Nicaragua and Honduras in the Caribbean Sea (Nicaragua v. Honduras)*. Such results are the fruit of intense efforts by the judges, in spite of logistic difficulties pointed out for many years by successive Presidents of the Court.

It is unfortunate that the main legal body of the United Nations remains the poor relation of our Organization in budgetary matters. Member States, through the General Assembly, have a duty to follow up on requests by the Court to give it the necessary resources — human and financial — to permit it to effectively carry out the tasks given it by the Charter.

Algeria welcomes the continued efforts by the Court to reconsider its working methods, and especially the changes and adjustments made this year through its new Practice Directions.

Judge Higgins has described the many cases the Court has considered and its judgments and opinions since its creation. Respect for and implementation of the judgments are crucial for the parties concerned and the whole international community. The Charter gave the Security Council a role in that regard.

The same is true of the advisory opinions handed down by that main judicial organ of the United Nations. They are not simply points of view; they reaffirm the principles of international law and contribute to the enrichment and development of that law. They must therefore be respected by all Member States, and above all by the principal organs of the United Nations: the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Alas, too many opinions go unheeded, the latest being the Advisory Opinion on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. That Opinion, which enshrines the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force, should be taken into account by the major United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

States Members, through the various relevant bodies of the United Nations system, should continue to make use of the Court's jurisdiction by requesting advisory opinions on subjects of interest or concern to them. That would result in the promotion of the rule of law, peaceful coexistence and the other principles and ideals advocated by those who wrote the Charter in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Mr. Gómez-Robledo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to express Mexico's gratitude to Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice, for her excellent work in the past year at the helm of the highest international tribunal, and to express our thanks for the report submitted to the Assembly.

I also take this opportunity to reiterate Mexico's solemn commitment to respect international law and promote mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes, including, of course, recourse to the Court. Because of that conviction, Mexico promotes the role of the International Court of Justice in every effort under way to strengthen the United Nations. We are therefore steadfastly committed to expanding the use of the Court's consultative jurisdiction.

Likewise, in the Sixth Committee, in dealing with agenda item 86, "The rule of law at the national and international levels", we have called for the consideration of further ways and means to facilitate the submission of disputes between States to the International Court of Justice, as a way to strengthen the rule of law.

The report of the Court allows us to understand the development of international law through its application to real cases. The report also points to the role of the Court in the maintenance of international peace and security through the exercise of its jurisdiction.

Mexico recognizes the great legal value of the Court's judgments, both for States parties to a dispute and for the international community as a whole. There is no doubt that its judgments chart the course of the development of international law, while contributing to essential preventive work to avoid breaches of international peace and security.

In that regard, Mexico acknowledges the Court's Judgment in the case regarding the *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*), handed down on 26 February 2007. We would like to highlight the fact that the Court's strict interpretation of the Convention, particularly of article II, made it possible to set the threshold of the intentionality to destroy a group as such, in whole or in part, as a fundamental element in determining whether the crime of genocide has been committed. That is of paramount importance in an age when genocide is too often confused with other crimes against humanity.

As that was the first time an international tribunal had ruled on the commission of the crime of genocide from the perspective of adjudicating the international responsibility of a State, as opposed to individual criminal responsibility, the Judgment constitutes a very important step for the suppression of genocide and strengthening the regime established by the Convention.

In addition, Mexico underscores the fact that that Judgment gave us an opportunity to assess the value of cooperation between two international tribunals — in this case, between the International Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. That is an excellent example of how cooperation between international jurisdictions does not necessarily pose the threat of fragmentation in international law — quite the contrary.

A year ago President Higgins told us of her optimism with regard to cooperation between international tribunals. The Judgment to which I have referred confirms that such cooperation can benefit international law.

The Government of Mexico is giving special attention to the request by the Court, in paragraph 23 of its report, for the establishment of nine law clerk posts and one additional post for a senior official in the Department of Legal Matters for the next two years. We believe that promoting the submission by States of their legal differences to the Court must be accompanied by the support it needs to carry out its tasks efficiently.

In view of the number of pending cases and potential future disputes, not to mention the extraordinary effort being made to clear the backlog, as well as the great deal of research and investigation required of judges in that connection, it is clear that the Court should have more than five assistants to serve all the judges. Five are clearly not enough. As the President pointed out, the Court's current pace is essential if States want justice to be done without unacceptable delays, but it cannot be maintained if the members of the Court do not receive more support. Mexico will give its full support on this issue in the debates to be held in the Fifth Committee.

In conclusion, Mexico believes that the rule of law is not possible without efficient jurisdictional mechanisms to peacefully resolve disputes that may arise in the application or interpretation of international law by States. The judgments and advisory opinions of the Court illustrate the validity of international law as well as the Court's relevance as the highest international tribunal of the international system.

Ms. Govindasamy (Malaysia): My delegation thanks Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice, for her eloquent presentation of the report of the Court. The comprehensive report is extremely useful in enabling Member States to understand and appreciate the complexity of the work of the Court and the complex issues that the Court deals with.

Malaysia compliments the Court for its contribution to the peaceful settlement of disputes between States and to the development of international law. It is self-evident that if the international community wishes to resolve and prevent conflicts in a peaceful manner it needs an impartial third party competent to deal with the relevant legal questions.

The Court has undoubtedly played an important and influential role in the promotion of peace and harmony between nations and peoples of the world through observance of the rule of law by helping to resolve disputes between States through legal means and by giving advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it in accordance with international law. Malaysia recognizes that role, and has full confidence in the Court's competence and ability to discharge its role as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, as stipulated in the Charter and in the Court's Statute.

The Court has been accessible to all States for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Acceptance of its compulsory jurisdiction signifies that a nation is willing to acknowledge the adjudicative powers of the Court in all legal disputes regarding the interpretation of a treaty, in any question of international law and in interpretation of other international obligations.

Malaysia is pleased to note that since 1946 the Court has delivered no fewer than 92 judgments and 40 orders, with one third of those judgments and nearly half of those orders rendered in the last decade. The increased use of the Court is strong evidence that the level of confidence in it is extremely high, because it can be trusted to be impartial and effective. We are pleased that the Court has handed down very high-quality judgments and advisory opinions.

Malaysia's belief that the Court is the most appropriate avenue for the peaceful and final resolution of disputes, when all efforts in diplomacy have been exhausted, has been further strengthened by the confidence that we and the international community have in the role, function and accomplishments of the Court.

Malaysia itself, in agreement with the other parties concerned, has submitted territorial disputes for adjudication. Malaysia will fully respect the Court's decision in such cases, consistent with its abiding adherence to international law. We strongly believe that respect for the Court's decisions would contribute greatly to enhancing its stature and prestige, and in turn inculcate a culture of respect for the rule of law at the international level.

My delegation believes that the significant increase of cases on the Court's docket augurs well for the progressive development of international law and the role of the Court as a dispute settlement mechanism.

We note the acceptance by 65 States of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction, in accordance with Article 36, paragraph 2, of its Statute, and that some 300 bilateral or multilateral treaties contain provisions for the Court to have jurisdiction in the resolution of disputes arising out of the application or interpretation of those respective treaties. These welcome developments clearly demonstrate the increasing confidence in the Council's decisions and reliance on the settlement of disputes through adjudication rather than by the use of force. This manifestation of confidence in the rule of law is particularly important when the world is facing many daunting threats and challenges.

My delegation takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the Secretary-General's Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the International Court of Justice. We note the Secretary-General's appeal for all States and other relevant entities to give serious consideration to making contributions to the Fund, which has had a decreasing level of resources since its inception. We also note the revision in the Fund's terms of reference.

Malaysia commends the Court's efforts — through its publications and lectures by the President, members of the Court, the Registrar and members of the Registry staff — to increase public awareness and understanding of its work in the judicial settlement of international disputes, its advisory functions, case law and working methods, as well as its role within the United Nations. We welcome the Court's distribution of press releases, background notes and its handbook to keep the public informed about its work, functions and jurisdiction.

We concur that the Court's website has been extremely useful and well utilised by diplomats, lawyers, academicians, students and interested members of the public as an important source of access to the Court's judgments, which constitute the most recent developments in international case law.

We hope that the Court will be granted adequate resources to allow it to continue to fulfil its mandate and meet the demands of an increasing workload.

Mr. Krishnaswamy (India): We welcome the opportunity to address the General Assembly on the report of the International Court of Justice and thank the President of the Court, Judge Rosalyn Higgins, for her introduction.

We commend Judge Higgins for her dedicated stewardship of the Court and for the Court's impressive achievements over the period under review. This will no doubt further enhance the international community's confidence in this unique organ of international law, which has made a distinctive contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

India continues to believe that no other judicial organ in the world can have the same capacity for dealing with international legal problems as the International Court of Justice, which is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, entrusted with settling legal disputes between sovereign States and the promotion of the rule of law in international relations.

Over the years, the Court has been engaged in finding just and equitable solutions to legal disputes between States, and there has been a noticeable increase in the number of cases referred to it.

Another significant development is that, unlike in the past, when the jurisdiction phases of cases occupied most of the Court's time, the Court is now frequently called upon to deal directly with a diversity of complex substantive issues of international law from all regions of the world.

During the period under review, the Court rendered three very important decisions involving cases from Latin America, Africa and Europe. Their subject matter covered issues ranging from diplomatic protection of shareholders to environmental protection to genocide. This affirms once again the important role that the Court and international law play in the search for solutions to the problems of an interdependent world, in which economic, social and humanitarian issues have assumed paramount importance.

The recent period has witnessed the creation of a number of specialised regional and international courts. Along with their creation have come concerns about the fragmentation of international law. There is apprehension that similar legal issues or disputes may well be subjected to final and binding interpretations by two different bodies, projecting differing views. There is considerable apprehension that the expansion of the field in this regard could create problems of coherence between different specializations, institutions and norm systems.

The challenge, therefore, is to find a balance between, on the one hand, the need for diversity and specialized regimes and solutions, and, on the other, the importance of maintaining an overall framework or system of international law that offers a sufficient degree of security and coherence. It has been pointed out that the toolbox of international law — especially general international law and the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties — is not perfect, but flexible enough to assist negotiators, lawyers and judges in finding this balance.

We welcome the initiative taken by the President of the Court for a regular dialogue between the international courts and tribunals and exchanges of information with a view to improving the unity of international law and addressing the problem of overlapping jurisdictions or the fragmentation of international law.

In order for the Court to respond effectively to the increasing demands on resources made on it and to carry out its mandate efficiently, it must be provided with adequate resources. It is a matter of concern that the 15 judges have to share and rely on five legal professionals to carry out research on complicated questions of international law and to prepare studies and notes for the judges and the Registrar. We therefore reiterate that the Court's request for individualized legal assistance for all its members is reasonable and should be granted to enable it to efficiently carry out its designated functions as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

Finally, I urge a re-examination of resolution 61/262, which has created a discriminatory salary regime among the 15 judges of the International Court of Justice. We hope that that unintended anomaly will be rectified.

Ms. Defensor-Santiago (Philippines): It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of the Philippines, to address the General Assembly on its consideration of the report of the International Court of Justice.

My delegation commends Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the Court, for her dedicated stewardship of the World Court and for the comprehensive report she has just presented.

The growing number of treaties negotiated between and among States underlines the heightened need to regulate the complex web of international relations in our increasingly interdependent world. With that end in mind, our world leaders adopted in 2000 the Millennium Declaration, in which they resolved to, among other things, strengthen respect for the rule of law in international, as in national, affairs and ensure compliance with the decisions of the International Court of Justice.

My delegation notes with profound appreciation the efforts made by the World Court to make its decisions more transparent and widely accessible to the public through effective use of the World Wide Web. We cannot overemphasize the value of having those decisions more widely known in strengthening the foundations for the effective implementation of the rule of law.

New and emerging subjects of specialization in international law demand thorough consideration in order to ensure that rights are not encumbered and that obligations are respected.

The report of President Higgins highlights the diversity of issues brought before the World Court. It underscores the evolution of the body of rights, privileges and obligations that presents the modern-day intricacies of international law.

The Philippines notes the structural flexibility of the World Court, demonstrated by its resort to chambers in considering specialized cases. We support the idea that such a mechanism may be useful in settling disputes involving specialized issues. For example, the Chamber for Environmental Matters is available for resolving issues involving environment-related disputes.

The Philippines reaffirms its support for the work of the International Court of Justice and the invaluable role it plays in promoting an international legal order founded on the primacy of the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

We subscribe to the premise that the rule of law is ultimately enforced through the assumption by States of their duties and obligations with regard to treaties negotiated between and among them and their application of the doctrines of sovereign equality, democratic principles and generally accepted norms of international law in their relations with one another. The role and importance of the World Court in guaranteeing the peaceful resolution of international disputes could not be made more obvious.

The increased workload of the International Court of Justice should be seen as a positive expression, not of the inability of States to settle disputes peacefully, but of the increasing trust and confidence in the legal supremacy of our World Court in ensuring respect for the rule of law and its universal jurisdiction.

Mr. Castellón Duarte (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its gratitude to Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice, for trading the tranquillity of The Hague for the bustle of this city to introduce the Court's report.

The presence of the President at the meetings of the Assembly at which the Court's report is considered and her oral presentation of her thoughts on that body's most relevant recent activities are both extremely useful, ensuring that the annual consideration of the report is not just a mere review of that document. Certainly, the information in the report is comprehensive, intelligently presented and illustrative of the facts. However, the boost given by the annual presence and statement of the Court's highest official is extremely gratifying and rewarding, as it enlivens consideration of the report and adds solemnity to the event.

No one will be surprised to hear me express my Government's pleasure over the Court's most recent Judgment, which less than a month ago put an end to the dispute that had strained our friendly relations with the brotherly Government and people of Honduras and divided our two countries. Fortunately, that important Judgment was well received by both countries. In effect, it satisfied both parties, since there were two facets to the matter — the insular and the maritime — and on each the Court's decision was favourable to one of the parties.

We have no doubt that the Court's position on each facet was the result of an absolutely objective, complete, conscientious and impartial consideration of the legal norms and relevant facts. We underscore the maturity of both Governments, which, unprecedentedly, pledged support, whatever the outcome, before the Judgment was made public.

We are pleased that, particularly in paragraph 303 of its Judgment, the Court affirmed its own case law, and that it made progress in an area of great interest for the international community as a whole, and especially for countries with Caribbean coast lines. I refer to maritime delimitation, an area in which — through no fewer than eight Judgments, including the most recent — the Court has made a very important and interesting contribution. In that undertaking its work has been complemented by arbitral awards, including the two most recent, in 2006 and 2007, determining delimitations in the Caribbean Sea and agreeing with the Court's jurisprudence in the matter. We of course recognize that the ideal would be conventional delimitation.

In that regard, we would also like to refer to the Managua Declaration: The Gulf of Fonseca, a zone of peace, sustainable development and security (A/62/486), signed by the Presidents of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua on 4 October 2007. The signing of that document was an important step forward in strengthening international peace and security, in line with the Judgment of the International Court of Justice handed down on 11 September 1992.

I would like to highlight, in order to give special recognition to the Court, the difficulties in application that are characteristic of the type of law with which it deals.

With regard to one of the main branches of this body of law — which Article 38 of the Statute of the Court calls "international custom" and which is more commonly known as customary international law — I recall an opinion expressed by a distinguished former President of the Court, from Latin America. In one of his works, that eminent jurist compared customary international law to an amorphous Medusa.

If we consider the other main branch of law applied by the Court, treaty law, we see that that normative area includes texts that are not always of the technical quality that would have been desirable — and, I might add, possible.

To give a more complete idea of the difficulty of the Court's tasks, I should also like to mention something that my country has observed at first hand: problems that can cause political factors to interfere in matters brought before the Court. Because the Court has been largely successful in dealing with those and other difficulties, we warmly congratulate it, through its President.

Finally, very regrettably, I must now turn from the positive to the negative and refer to the difficulty — or, rather, the injustice — created by paragraph 8 of resolution 61/262, adopted on 4 April 2007. Ms. Rosalyn Higgins, President of the Court, spoke of it this morning.

At the meeting at which the resolution was adopted, the concerns expressed by the President of the Court in a letter dated 3 April 2007 to the President of the General Assembly (A/61/837) were noted on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as recorded at page 5 of A/61/PV.93. It was also stated on behalf of those countries that those concerns would be taken into account at the current session. I believe it is very important to indicate that Nicaragua unreservedly supports the positions taken by the Group of 77 and China.

I wish to add that we believe that paragraph 8 of resolution 61/262 is not in conformity with paragraph 2 of article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides that "Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work".

Mr. Tavares (Portugal): Let me start by expressing the gratitude of the delegation of Portugal to the President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Rosalyn Higgins, for the thorough report on the work of the Court over the past year.

The Court's essential role in the international legal system must be underlined and remembered, as the Court is the principal judicial body of the United Nations and, in that capacity, carries out two of the most important tasks in the international community: the peaceful settlement of disputes between States and the strengthening of the international rule of law.

As stated in the report, the workload of the Court steadily continues to increase. In July 2007, the number of cases on the docket stood at 12. The Court has handed down two Judgments and one Order on a request for the indication of provisional measures. In the meantime, another judgment has been rendered. The Court has also held hearings in four other cases.

It is important to note that the cases before the International Court of Justice come from all over the world and relate to diverse areas of international law, demonstrating not only the universality of the Court, but also the expansion of the scope of its work and its growing specialization. That dramatically strengthens the Court's contribution to the progress of international law, and therefore the Court should be able to count on the full support of all members of the international community.

In that context, it should also be recalled that although the International Court of Justice is a leading player in the international judicial arena, as a truly universal Court in the exercise of general jurisdiction, there are other international courts and tribunals whose existence and importance should be underlined. In that regard, Portugal welcomes the remarks made by President Higgins in her address to the meeting of legal advisers held at the beginning of this week. We view increased contacts and cooperation between international courts and tribunals as a very positive development. It is our strong view that they all work together to enhance the international legal order and that they must complement one another in the furtherance of that goal.

If the Court is to be able to carry out its fundamental tasks, and if a greater number of States are to be engaged in the resolution of their disputes, it is important that Member States acknowledge the Court's need for adequate resources. That is so, for instance, with regard to the Court's request for law clerk posts to assist judges in the increasing number of fact-intensive cases. Having just celebrated its sixtieth anniversary, the Court has indeed been busier than ever before.

As of 31 July 2007, 192 States were parties to the Statute of the Court, and 65 of them had deposited with the Secretary-General a declaration of acceptance of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 36 of the Statute. Moreover, approximately 300 bilateral or multilateral treaties provide for the Court to have jurisdiction in the resolution of disputes arising out of their application or interpretation. That highlights the Court's role as the main judicial body in the interpretation and application of international law. In that context, Portugal recalls the recommendation of the 2005 World Summit that States that have not yet done so should consider accepting the Court's jurisdiction, in accordance with the Statute.

In conclusion, while recognizing that in contemporary international law there is an intrinsic and unavoidable paradox — the obligation of States to settle their disputes in a peaceful manner and the need for sovereign consent to put into practice such settlement mechanisms — Portugal holds the firm conviction that the International Court of Justice plays a crucial role in the international legal order, and that that role is more and more accepted by the whole international community.

Mr. Stemmet (South Africa): I take this opportunity to thank the President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Rosalyn Higgins, for her address in presenting the report of the Court for the period from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007.

The delegation of South Africa has noted the report, from which it is clear that the Court's caseload has increased considerably over recent years, while the subject matter of the cases before it has become more diverse and the issues dealt with more complex. Those developments, in our view, serve to illustrate the international community's continued confidence in the

Court as an institution able to resolve disputes, as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

We have also noted with satisfaction the report's references to increased efficiency in the management and operation of the Court, which have enabled it to cope with its increased caseload. We commend the Court in that regard.

We further wish to point out that in what can be considered to be a somewhat unusual development in a domestic jurisdiction, the Court's finding in the case of *Ahmadou Sadio Diallo (Republic of Guinea v. Democratic Republic of the Congo*) has resonated before the Supreme Court of Appeal in South Africa as a source of reference in a recent case on diplomatic protection. The use of that case in arguments and judgement in our national courts demonstrates the strong persuasive power of the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice upon national justice systems.

We have also taken note with great interest of the Court's decision in the case of *Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*, which we believe will become the seminal case on the issue of the responsibility of States with regard to the commission of international crimes, in particular, in relation to the interpretation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Finally, the growing trend of countries, particularly developing countries, to resolve their disputes by using the International Court of Justice must be encouraged. Hence, the Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the International Court of Justice must be maintained and given wider publicity. It is our hope that the Fund will see an increase in its level of resources, and that it will contribute to more States utilizing the Court for the resolution of their disputes.

Mr. Muburi-Muita (Kenya): On behalf of my delegation, Madam Vice-President, I congratulate you on the excellent manner in which you continue to conduct our deliberations.

My delegation commends Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice, for the comprehensive report presented to us, detailing the work accomplished by the Court over the past year.

We wish to underscore the central role played by the Court in the administration of global justice through the peaceful settlement of disputes, as enshrined in the Charter. The adjudication of disputes by the Court, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, plays a pivotal role in the maintenance of international peace, order and stability, for which we commend the Court.

We note that over the past year the Court has continued to be seized of a number of contentious cases, on which it has handed down two judgments and one order. Even as we acknowledge the complexity of the cases before the Court, we are confident that it and the parties involved will strive to reach an expeditious settlement of the disputes.

We urge States, in the exercise of their sovereignty, to freely submit disputes to the Court. However, we note with concern that only 65 of the 192 States parties to the Statute have declared their acceptance of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction. We encourage States that have not done so to consider accepting the Court's compulsory jurisdiction, in accordance with article 36 of the Statute. As a State party to the Statute, Kenya is among the countries that have accepted the Court's compulsory jurisdiction.

The official visits to the Court by Heads of State and Government and other high-ranking government officials reflect the recognition conferred on the Court, and play an important role in enhancing its image as a central organ for international dispute resolution. We encourage such visits as part of the awareness programmes, and therefore call upon the Court to put in place measures by which officials from Member States can be educated during such visits.

The decisions of the Court contribute to the progressive development of international law, and we encourage the Court to continue disseminating these decisions through publication and distribution to the relevant institutions in Member States.

In closing, I reiterate the importance Kenya attaches to the work of the Court. We urge Member States to make greater use of its advisory powers and, most important, to increase compliance with its decisions.

Mr. Wal (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We express our appreciation to the International Court of Justice, which celebrated its sixtieth anniversary last year.

Over the years, the Court has met the expectations of States by establishing the rule of law in international relations. We express our thanks to Ms. Higgins, the President of the International Court of Justice, for presenting the detailed report on its activities.

The report gives us an overview of the important activities carried out by the Court. Once again, it shows that the Court is the major forum and strict guarantor of respect for the principles of international law, the rule of law and the principles of the Charter, especially the non-use of force in inter-State relations, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the equal sovereignty of States.

The efforts referred to in the report show once again that the Court is the major judiciary body of the United Nations and the only tribunal with international jurisdiction and overall competence. It is also the most appropriate mechanism for implementing the principles of the Charter and bringing about the peaceful settlement of disputes between States in an impartial, transparent manner, in accordance with the rules of justice and international law. That is why the Court is essential to the maintenance of international peace and security.

We welcome the fact that 192 States are now parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice, with 65, including the Sudan, having agreed to the Court's binding jurisdiction. That shows the confidence that the international community has in the role of the Court, which can then settle disputes among States in a peaceful manner, develop international law and strengthen peaceful coexistence among peoples.

The report also refers to the number of cases brought before the Court. Those are more complex in nature. However, the Court has shown its ability to settle those questions effectively, especially since it has recently demonstrated its ability in strategic planning, which strengthens its effectiveness.

My delegation would like to refer to the 2005 World Summit decision emphasizing the need for States to settle their disputes peacefully, pursuant to Chapter VI of the Charter. That includes making use of the International Court of Justice.

States must then comply with the declared principles of international law and friendly relations and cooperation among States, pursuant to the Charter. That is why it is necessary to support the Court, and to recognize the binding competence of its decisions and judgments, so that the rule of law can be enhanced.

Agreeing to the Court's budget proposals, as contained in the report, would help to strengthen its role in the peaceful settlement of disputes, at a lower cost and with more effectiveness. The Court should shed light on the obstacles it faces, and in its future reports make recommendations that States will note and follow.

Next we refer to the report of the Secretary-General on the Secretary-General's Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the International Court of Justice. We agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation that States and other relevant bodies consider making contributions to the Fund in order to help States, especially poor States, to use the services of the Court.

My delegation thanks the Court for the efforts made in issuing its documents, as well as the contents of its orders and decisions, especially those on its new website.

Finally, we reiterate our confidence in the important role played by the International Court of Justice, which is the main judicial body of the United Nations. We also reaffirm our support for the Court in carrying out its responsibilities in the best possible manner.

Mr. Aniokoye (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation warmly welcomes Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice, and thanks her for the Court's report covering the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. We are also appreciative of her briefing on 29 October to the legal advisers of Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Member States. We welcome this enlightening annual exchange.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his report.

We are happy that the Court has worked tirelessly and consistently in the discharge of its twofold mandate of adjudicating legal disputes submitted to it by States and giving advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.

It is heartening to note that the Court has had a very productive year, with three judgments already rendered, one order on provisional measures made, one case under preparation and a new case opening shortly. Since the first case was entered in the general list of the court, on 22 May 1947, a total of 136 cases have to date been entered in the list.

What I have described is a positive development, especially since the value of the ICJ is to be judged not only by the number of cases it handles, but, even more, by its contributions to the development of international law. The invaluable nature of the Court's contributions was only slightly revealed when the President addressed legal advisers on 29 October, through her reference to but a few of the cases. Her discussion of the cases threw light on some of the issues currently being deliberated upon by the Sixth Committee, such as diplomatic protection and the question of overlapping jurisdictions between international courts and tribunals.

The Nigerian delegation notes with satisfaction the refreshing interchange and regular dialogue between the Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Issues decided by other international or regional judicial bodies arise in International Court cases, and the judicial work of other international courts and tribunals also has relevance to its findings. This development is highly commendable, especially as it could help in forestalling the fragmentation of international law. In this connection, we commend the Court for putting in place a detailed programme of cooperation between it and other international judicial bodies.

The Nigerian delegation equally supports the call for increased resources for the Court to enable it to effectively bear its ever-increasing caseload and its other responsibilities. We also call upon Member States to ensure that they contribute to the transformation of the World Court.

It was in recognition of the indispensable and dependable nature of the Court's work that my country submitted to its jurisdiction in the dispute between it and a neighbouring country. In the same vein, since the Court's Judgment in 2002 we have painstakingly and in cooperation worked towards its complete implementation.

We urge Member States to take disputes before the Court. This will ensure peaceful resolution of disputes, as well as enlarge the spectrum of the Court's contribution to the further development of international law.

Mr. Romero-Martinez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the presentation of the report of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) by its President, Judge Rosalyn Higgins. In thanking her, my country also wishes to thank her and the other judges who make up the Court for their continuous efforts in the application of international law for the peaceful settlement of disputes, which undoubtedly make a positive contribution to strengthening international peace and security.

Just a few weeks ago, the ICJ handed down its judgment on the maritime delimitation between our country and the sister Republic of Nicaragua. Honduras, through the President of the Republic, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and its officials, has always reiterated that it will abide by and accept the compulsory obligation.

Honduras believes in the peaceful settlement of disputes and firmly believes in the effective application of international law. The Presidents of Honduras and Nicaragua met on the day of the decision and embraced in solidarity, peace, harmony, and, above all, in the knowledge that there would be compulsory application of international legal order and compliance with its decisions.

Our countries believe in peace. They believe in international justice. They believe in legal order. And, above all, they are committed to creating an environment of world harmony that can, in some way, send messages that confirm that there can be no dispute that cannot find a legal solution under established international mechanisms.

The International Court of Justice, as the main juridical organ of the United Nations, takes important matters and decisions under its jurisdiction. Its judgments contribute to a world of peace and order. Hence, my delegation, in addition to recognizing its juridical work, will contribute to giving it legitimate support in the various Committees of this Organization. We are sympathetic to the concerns that the President expressed today, and she will have our support in the discussions in the Fifth Committee and the Assembly.

Once again, on behalf of Honduras, I thank the President of the Court, Judge Rosalyn Higgins, for presenting its important report. I also reiterate the commitment of Honduras to support the work of the Court, to continue supporting the application of international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes, and, fundamentally, to support the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court.

Mr. Park Hee-kwon (Republic of Korea): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I thank Judge Rosalyn Higgins, President of the International Court of Justice, for her lucid introduction of the Court's report. The report convinces us that the Court has diligently fulfilled its noble mission as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. The increasing number of cases brought before it attests to the level of trust given it by States. In this regard, my delegation commends the judges and all the Court's staff for converting many sceptics into believers in the rule of law.

Notably, the Court rendered two final judgments this year. In both cases, the Court met our high expectations of authoritative language on matters of international law. I would like to touch briefly upon one of the two judgments.

In February this year, the Court delivered its Judgment in the case *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro)*. The case marked the first time that one State had brought allegations of genocide against another. In its Judgment, the Court rejected the "overall control" test for determining responsibility for acts committed by paramilitary units — the test adopted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Tadic case — and instead once again applied an "effective control" test. My delegation supports the Court's position, because we believe that the "effective control" test could reasonably set the scope of State responsibility, which is not necessarily determined under the same legal standard as individual criminal responsibility.

The International Court of Justice has not always enjoyed its current level of trust from the international community. Indeed, its case load remained fairly low until the 1970s, when the Court successfully overcame the suspicion among many developing countries that it was biased. Since then, the Court's client base has expanded dramatically. The changing perceptions of the Court's work can be attributed to a number of factors, including the end of the cold war, but most importantly they have resulted from the Court's own successful responses to the challenges facing the world today. The report shows that this continues to be the case as the Court faces the challenge of handling an increased workload with limited resources.

Indeed, there is a kind of virtuous cycle at work: the more successful the Court is in fulfilling its responsibilities, the more cases will be brought to it. Moreover, taking into account the increasing number of States parties to the Court accepting the Court's compulsory jurisdiction, and the number of treaties with provisions that confer jurisdiction upon the Court, it would not surprise us to see a continued increase, or even an acceleration, in the number of cases brought before the Court.

High expectations that the Court will play a more active role are also bound to increase its workload. Thus, the Court, and the international community that supports it, must recognize that the challenge of an increasing workload is likely to stay with us for some time. This is a challenge that we must meet as we strive to achieve the ideal of resolving disputes peacefully by judicial means.

It has been said that one of the necessary conditions for more effective law is to strengthen and improve the institutions and processes for the law's administration. We agree with this sentiment, which is why we support the Court's initiatives to improve its efficiency by streamlining procedures, adopting advanced technologies and asking for more resources. We believe that adequate resources should be allocated to support the Court's efforts to meet its growing workload, and we therefore hope that this request will be considered favourably by the relevant bodies.

By the same token, we emphasize that the challenge of an increased case load requires cooperation among Member States. In many of the recent contentious cases, too many of the Court's limited resources have been wasted during the preliminary stages, rather than being used in the consideration of the merits. While we should respect the right of States to full access to the procedures of the Court, and to be exempt from the Court's jurisdiction unless they have given their due consent, overburdening the Court with unnecessary requests for provisional measures, preliminary objections or applications of cases, as a pure litigation strategy, should be avoided for the common good. Such prudence on the part of States will greatly assist the Court in completing its important work.

The most recent challenge to the Court, however, comes from outside. In this era of proliferating international courts and tribunals, we cannot overstate the importance of the Court's leadership role. As the only universal international court with general jurisdiction, the Court is now obligated to distribute and disseminate its work even more widely.

I conclude by reaffirming the Republic of Korea's steadfast and unwavering support for the untiring efforts of the Court to achieve the ideal of peace under the rule of law.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): It is my great pleasure and honour to address the Assembly on behalf of the Government of Japan.

My delegation expresses its appreciation to President Rosalyn Higgins for her comprehensive report on the current situation of the International Court of Justice, and would also like to offer its praise and support for the achievements in the Court's work during the past year.

The devoted work and profound legal wisdom of the Court have been gaining the respect and support of the international community. The report states that countries from a broader area of the world have begun to bring cases before the Court to seek the peaceful settlement of conflicts. This clearly demonstrates that in today's international community the Court now enjoys the universal commitment that the principal judicial organ of the United Nations ought to have. From this point of view, we have full confidence that the Court's role will continue to increase in importance in the efforts to promote peace and security and establish the rule of law in the international community.

As regards activities to advance the rule of law, the past year has been a remarkable one for Japan. At the beginning of the year, our Government designated "rule of law" as one of the major pillars of Japanese diplomacy, enabling us to take the initiative in promoting such universal values as democracy, respect for basic human rights, the market economy and the rule of law in the international community.

In addition to its previous activities contributing to the establishment of the rule of law in the world, Japan this year took steps to develop further cooperative relations with international judicial organs in line with this policy. Japan acceded to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and became its 105th party as of 1 October this year. With regard to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Japan referred two cases to the Tribunal in July, thus contributing to the development of judicial precedents in the area of the law of the sea.

First and foremost, Japan has been placing great importance on its cooperative relationship with the International Court of Justice, the sole international court with general jurisdiction. My Government invited President Higgins to Japan in April, giving the Japanese people an invaluable opportunity to hear an insightful presentation on the work of the Court and on international law, which contributed significantly to promoting the advocacy of the international judicial system in Japan. We fully intend to continue this productive relationship with the Court.

I would like to draw the attention of all members of the international community to the imminent necessity of strengthening the institutional capacity of the Court so that it can continue to discharge its noble responsibility. The Government of Japan hopes that this issue will be favourably discussed in appropriate bodies, giving due consideration to the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. At the same time, it expects that the Court will continue its efforts to increase the efficiency of its work.

To conclude, one cannot overstate the importance of the lofty cause and work of the International Court of Justice. I take this occasion to reaffirm that Japan will continue to contribute to its invaluable work.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 73.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 73?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 76 (continued)

Report of the International Criminal Court

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/314)

The Acting President: I call on Mr. Philippe Kirsch, President of the International Criminal Court.

Mr. Kirsch (*spoke in French*): I am very pleased today to present the third annual report of the International Criminal Court to the United Nations.

Since its establishment, the Court has developed substantially in its activities and in its relationship with the United Nations. Nevertheless, we are still at an early stage in the life of the Court. Much more remains to be done to guarantee the success of this nascent institution.

I would like to give a brief overview of recent developments, elaborate on the Court's contributions to the aims of the United Nations and speak about the importance of continued support and cooperation from the Organization.

Today, the Court stands on the verge of its first trial. In January this year, a chamber of three judges confirmed charges of war crimes against Mr. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, an alleged militia leader from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is accused of enlisting, conscripting and using children under the age of 15 to participate actively in hostilities. A trial chamber composed of another three judges is currently addressing preliminary issues before the trial begins early next year.

In another case regarding the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Germain Katanga was surrendered to the Court on 18 October. The crimes alleged in the warrant of arrest for Mr. Katanga include three counts of crimes against humanity and six of war crimes, namely, murder, inhumane acts, sexual slavery, wilful killing, inhuman or cruel treatment, attacking civilians, pillaging and using children under the age of 15 years to participate actively in hostilities. An initial hearing was held last week following his surrender. Pre-trial proceedings will take place over the coming months.

In regard to the situation in Darfur, Sudan, referred to the Court by the Security Council, a chamber of three judges issued warrants of arrest for two individuals in May. Mr. Ahmad Harun and Mr. Ali Kushayb are each wanted on over 40 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, persecution, forcible transfers of populations, attacks against civilians, pillaging and the destruction or seizure of enemy property. The Court has issued to States requests for the arrest and surrender of those two suspects. Neither warrant has been executed yet.

In regard to the situation in Uganda, the Court issued five warrants of arrest in 2005 for members of the group known as the Lord's Resistance Army, including its leader, Joseph Kony. Two of the suspects are wanted on over 30 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, attacking civilians, pillaging, cruel treatment and enslavement. Two others are wanted on ten and seven counts respectively of crimes against humanity and war crimes, also including murder, enslavement, attacking civilians and pillaging. One of the suspects was killed, rendering that warrant without effect. None of the other four warrants have been executed yet.

In May, the Prosecutor opened a fourth investigation; this is into the situation in the Central African Republic. Two weeks ago, the Court opened a field office in the capital, Bangui. It is the fifth field office opened by the Court.

The Office of the Prosecutor is also analysing and assessing information on alleged crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court in other situations on three different continents.

The Court is now fully operational. The Prosecutor is conducting investigations and collecting evidence. Judicial proceedings have taken place at the pre-trial and appeals levels, and are beginning at the trial level. The special regard accorded to victims under the Rome Statute has developed in practice. The Trust Fund for Victims is fully functioning. For the first time in the history of international criminal courts and tribunals, victims are participating in proceedings in their own right.

Bringing to justice those responsible for international crimes is important in itself. But it is also a means to achieve other objectives found in both the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the International Criminal Court. Throughout the course of history, genocide, crimes against humanity and other serious international crimes have not arisen spontaneously. Rather, those crimes have occurred — and continue to occur — in the context of complex political conflicts. More often than not, there have been attempts to resolve such conflicts through expedient political compromises; more often than not, those compromises have ignored the need for justice and accountability; and, more often than not, expedient political solutions that ignored the need for justice unravelled, leading to more crimes, new conflicts and recurring threats to peace and security.

The International Criminal Court was created to break that vicious cycle of crimes, impunity and conflict. It was set up to contribute to justice and the prevention of crimes, and thereby to peace and security.

The Court is contributing to the realization of those objectives. Earlier this year, the Secretary-General noted, "Already the activities of the Court and its Prosecutor have a deterring effect on potential perpetrators of international crimes." {*UN News Centre, 29 June 2007*) A recently published expert report on the situation in Uganda observed: "The ICC investigation of the LRA" — Lord's Resistance Army — "has been crucial for promoting peace, improving security in northern Uganda and embedding international accountability standards into negotiations." (*Africa Briefing No. 46, p. 8, 14 Sept. 2007, International Crisis Group*)

(*spoke in English*)

The impact of the Court has resulted from its credibility as an independent and impartial institution whose decisions will be enforced. Sustaining that credibility depends on the two pillars of the Rome Statute system.

The Court itself is the judicial pillar. It is the Court's responsibility to continue to maintain its credibility as an independent and impartial judicial institution through strict adherence to the Rome Statute.

The other pillar of the Rome Statute — the enforcement pillar — has been reserved to States and, by extension, international organizations. The Court requires support and cooperation in many areas, in particular, the arrest and surrender of suspects and the protection of victims and witnesses. The primary responsibility for providing cooperation and support rests, of course, with the States parties to the Rome Statute. However, States not party to the Statute and international organizations, in particular, the United Nations, are also in a position to provide valuable assistance to the Court.

Individual States have contributed to the achievements of the Court by responding positively to requests for cooperation or assistance — for example, by providing information, logistics and other support to field operations or to the surrender of individuals to the Court. States have provided diplomatic and public support for the Court through at the bilateral level and in multilateral forums. Several States have entered into agreements to provide additional support, in particular, with respect to the enforcement of sentences or the protection of victims and witnesses.

The United Nations has provided critical cooperation and support to the Court. I would note, in particular, that the Court has received strong support from various United Nations bodies in the field. The Court appreciates the steps taken by the Secretary-General to raise the outstanding warrants of arrest in the situation in Darfur. The General Assembly and the Security Council have provided important public support to the Court in recent years by emphasizing respectively that "justice ... is a fundamental building block of sustainable peace" (resolution 61/15) and that "ending the climate of impunity is essential in a conflict and post-conflict society's efforts to come to terms with past abuses, and in preventing future abuses." (*S/PRST/2004/34*).

Notwithstanding the support and cooperation received to date, certain issues need to be addressed in order to sustain the credibility and effectiveness of the Court.

First, a number of direct requests for cooperation have not yet been fulfilled. Of those requests, the outstanding warrants of arrest are the most significant. Without arrests, there can be no trials; without trials, victims will again be denied justice, and potential perpetrators will be encouraged to commit new crimes with impunity.

Secondly, implementation of the judicial decisions issued by the Court has been uneven. It is clear, of course, that the situations and cases before the Court are linked to broader, complex political issues and developments, as has always been the case in similar situations in the past. Nevertheless, compliance with the decisions of the Court is not just another issue on the negotiating table. It is a legal obligation under the Rome Statute and under relevant Security Council resolutions. Conversely, it is to be clearly understood that the Court is bound to adhere strictly to its judicial mandate and to limit itself to that.

Thirdly, relative silence has been observed in situations in which public support for the Court and for the need for justice more broadly would be expected.

Silence in those situations may send the wrong message to perpetrators and potential perpetrators of serious international crimes. If the very purposes for which the Court was created are to be preserved, it is important that the international community reaffirm its fundamental commitment to the principles of justice and international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Statute of the Court.

The Court has already had opportunities to draw the attention of States parties to the issues I have just mentioned. The reactions of States parties have been encouraging for the future, and indeed have already resulted in concrete, positive developments. As for the United Nations itself — including its Member States, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat — it is in a position to take a number of actions to sustain and build upon the early impact of the Court. That support and cooperation can be grouped into three general areas.

First, operational cooperation from the United Nations and its Member States will continue to be critical, especially in the field. In addition to arrests, another area of pressing importance is assisting in the relocation and protection of victims and witnesses. The number of persons seeking protection or being accepted into the Court's protection programme has increased dramatically. The Court invites States that have not yet done so to conclude agreements on the relocation or protection of victims and witnesses.

Secondly, United Nations or other missions that can assist the Court should be empowered to fully support and cooperate with it. The objectives of the United Nations and those of the International Criminal Court are complementary. That is reflected in the Charter of the United Nations, the Rome Statute and the Relationship Agreement between the Court and the United Nations, as well as in the first referral of a situation by the Security Council to the Court.

Thirdly, the public and diplomatic support of the United Nations for the Court, and for international justice more broadly, is vital to ensuring a strong and effective Court. Such support fosters an environment in which States are more likely to comply with their legal obligations and to cooperate with the Court. Public and diplomatic support can also contribute directly to the prevention of crimes by reinforcing expectations, including among potential perpetrators, that the Court's decisions will be carried out and that the international community's commitment to justice will be upheld.

The Court did not create itself. The Court was set up by States to achieve the objectives that they expressed in the preamble to the Rome Statute: to put an end to impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes; to contribute to the prevention of those crimes, which threaten peace and security; and to guarantee lasting respect for, and the enforcement of, international justice. Those aims are universal. They are reflected in the Charter and in the statements and practice of the Member States and of the Organization.

Ten years ago, the General Assembly decided to convene the Rome Conference, which adopted the Rome Statute. On 17 July next year, the world will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Rome Statute and will ask what has been achieved.

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the momentum created in 1998 continues and that international justice prevails. I assure the Assembly that the Court will continue to do its part to ensure its effectiveness and credibility through independence and impartiality in strict accordance with the Rome Statute. The Court is confident that it can count on the strong support and cooperation of States, the United Nations, other international and regional organizations and civil society, now and in the future.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.